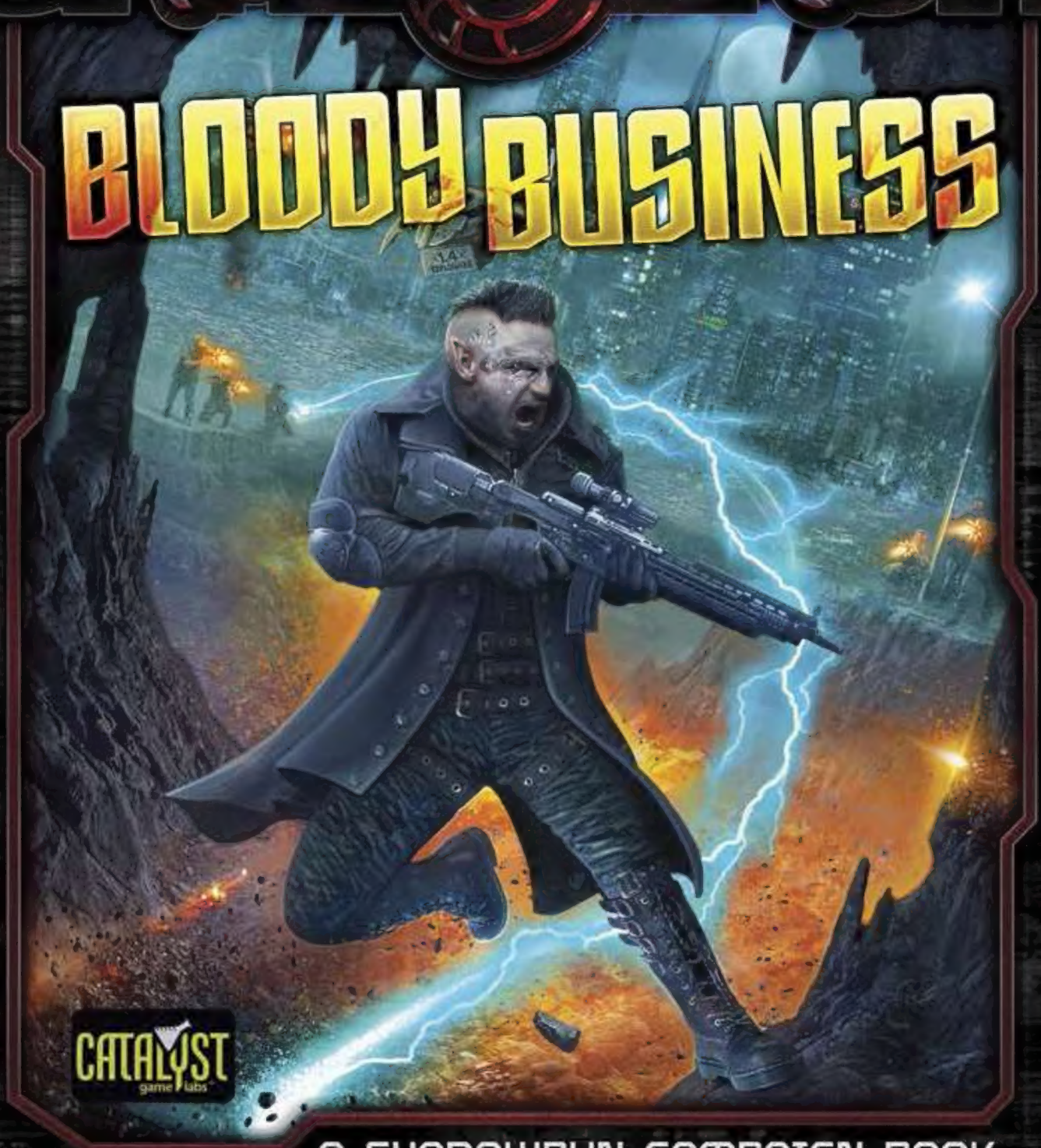
SHADOWRUN

BLOODY BUSINESS



CATALYST game labs

A SHADOWRUN CAMPAIGN BOOK

SCHLETZ
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EXPLOSIVES
BLOODY BUSINESS
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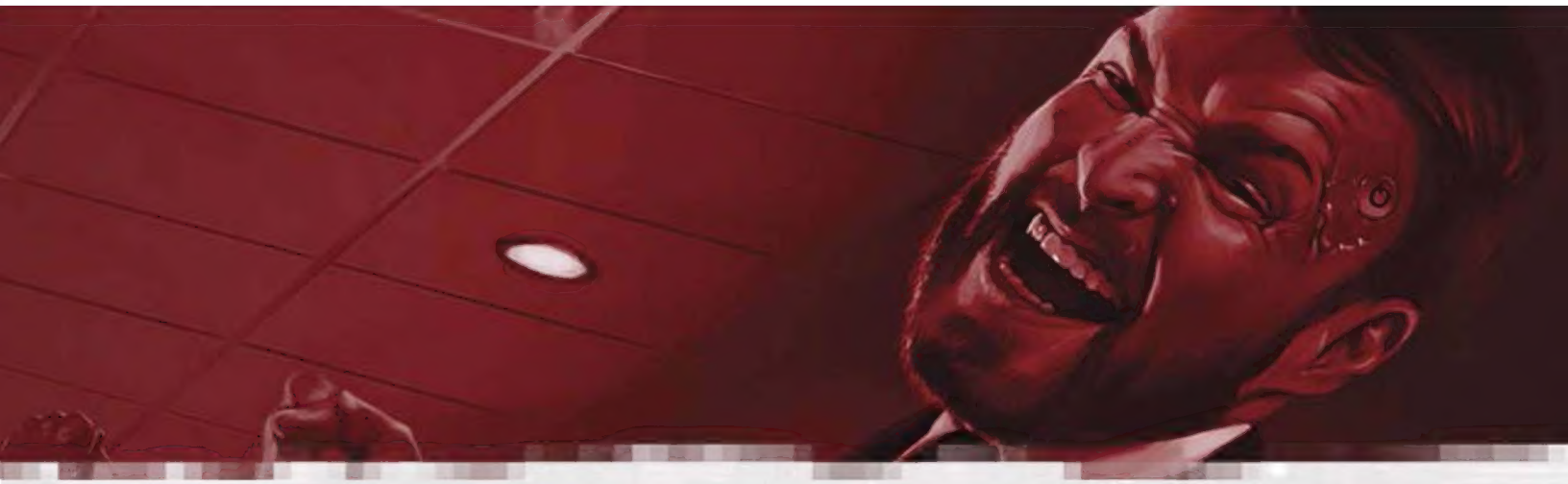

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BLOODY BUSINESS

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JACKPOINT

CONNECTING TO JACKPOINT VPN...
...IDENTITY SPOOFED
...ENCRYPTION KEYS GENERATED
...CONNECTED TO ONION ROUTERS

>>>LOGIN: XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
>>>ENTER PASSCODE: XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
...BIOMETRIC SCAN CONFIRMED
YOU'RE IN. USE IT WELL.

"ALL MONEY IS A MATTER OF BELIEF." -ADAM SMITH

JACKPOINT STATS

Interaction rate: +23%
Posts per hour: +19%
Today's content quality (signal:noise): 1:1

LATEST NEWS

<020777> I understand that people think tolerance for AIs is important. But that doesn't mean you all are authorized to issue invitations to them at will. Knock it off. –Glitch

PERSONAL ALERTS

You have 4 new private messages.

Your internal Q score is 34 (down 23 points)

You have 8 new responses to your JackPoint posts.

You have 7 new friend requests; 9 friends have dropped you.

PDA: Today's anti-Brackhaven protest is expected to draw only 2,500 people, so traffic should not be overly affected.

PDA: Your complimentary all-access pass to Urubia's Funhouse expires in 36 hours.

THE INNER CIRCLE

You are visible to your closest 1 level of contacts.
Your Eyes Only posts have been viewed 32 times
Current Time: Feb. 7, 2077, 10:54

WELCOME BACK TO JACKPOINT, OMAE:

Your last connection was severed:10 hours, 25 minutes, 33 seconds ago.

TODAY'S HEADS UP

Things are bad now. Inevitably, they're going to get worse. [Tag: Lockdown]

*Time for some tips for exploring the final frontier that's sitting on your hip. [Tag: Data Trails]

INCOMING

It's like being a regular person, but stronger, faster, and shinier [Tag: Chrome Flesh]

The real action doesn't start until you head for the caverns. [Tag: Butte]

TOP NEWS ITEMS

UCAS Secretary of Defense Ronald Despain deflects question about easing the Boston quarantine by saying "they've adjusted to it pretty well by now." Link

Maersk, Zeta-Imp Chem, Lone Star to call rare joint press conference. Link

Ghostwalker spokesperson Nicholas Whitebird says that interpreting the lack of retaliation against Aztlan for their incursion into Denver as acceptance of the new status quo would be "a mistake." Link

BLOODY BUSINESS

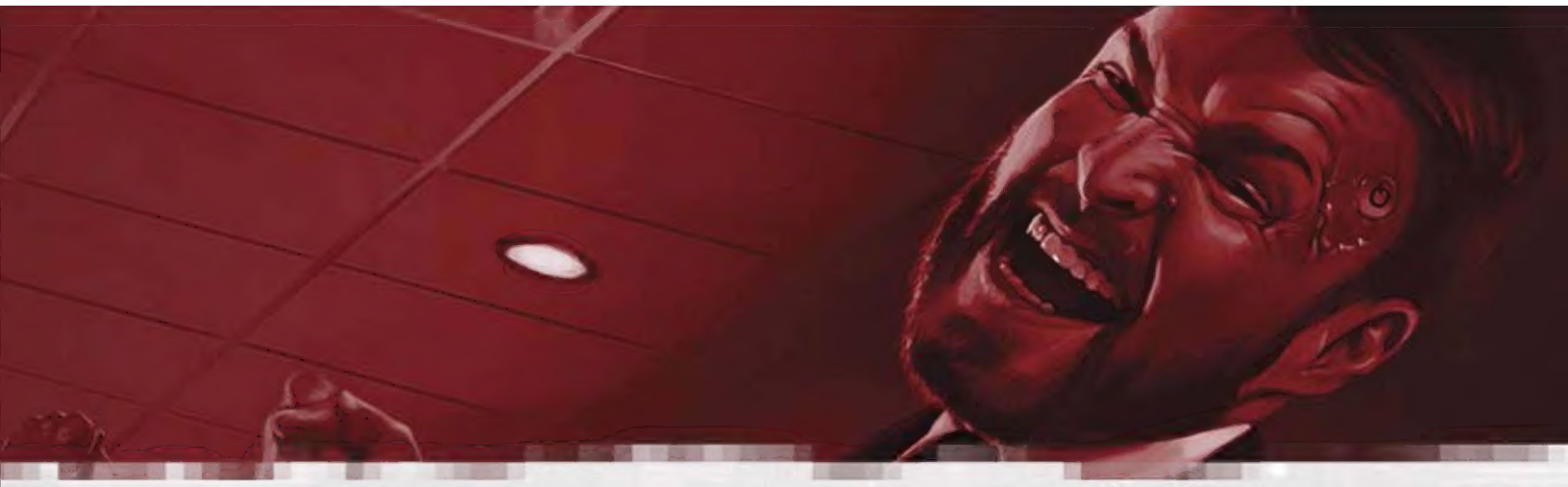
WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Details on the Megacorporate Audit
The bleeding edge of industrial sabotage
Travels around the globe at the bequest of any megacorp that doesn't hate you
Increasing instability, increasing desperation, increasing paydays

POSTS/FILES TAGGED WITH "BLOODY BUSINESS"

The Megacorporate Audit
Plummeting Prospects
A Place to Hang Your Hat
Running in a Toxic Wasteland

[More]



INTRODUCTION

The megacorporations of the Sixth World have a particular strategy for dealing with times when crises are rising, business is tough, and they need to work hard to avoid being swamped by the competition. They launch dozens of shadowruns to gather detail on their opponents' plans, sabotage their productions, steal their best employees, and otherwise play havoc with their operations. While they're at it, they pressure government officials under their thumb for prime concessions, see just how much fear they can inspire from their employees, aggressively takeover vulnerable businesses, and otherwise exercise their corporate muscle however they can.

It may well be asked, how is this different from how they operate when things are good? The answer is simple: Operations in bad times are pretty much the same as those in good times. The bad times are just more intense.

Early 2077 in the Sixth World is one of those times when there are plenty of crises to go around, the stakes seem heighented, and the money spigot flowing into the shadows is on. *Bloody Business* provides a look into what is going on in the various megacorporations of the world, showing how they are dealing with the problems at hand and the exact nature of some of the skullduggery they are involved in.

The first chapter of the book, **The Megacorporate Audit**, shows how the Big Ten of the Sixth World are reacting to some of their problems and re-asserting their authority. The next nineteen chapters are short adventures that start with in-universe material to establish some of the situations and problems sucking up corporate attention, and then present plot points gamemasters and players can follow to play through a storyline tied to those incidents. The chapters can be used individually as short adventures taking one (or possibly a handful) of sessions, or they can be tied together for a longer, corporate-themed campaign. Also, don't miss the **Character Trove** at the end of the book that presents a wide range of NPCs that can be used in any *Shadowrun* adventure or campaign.

Gamemasters are encouraged to configure adventures as they see fit, but here are some examples of how chapters could be tied together:

- *The Revision:* The last three adventures—**The Uprising, M&A-Dness,** and **Survival Instinct**—are all tied to the **Megacorpoarte Audit** plotline and could be played in sequence.
- *The Clash over* **CFD:** Cognitive fragmentation disorder is now a serious problem in the Sixth World, and the corporations are working hard both to discover a cure and deflect blame from themselves. Runners can help NeoNET find a new base of operations (in light of the Boston quarantine) in **A Place to Hang Your Hat.** That can earn them the trust of NeoNET, who refers them to Evo to look for information about CFD treatments in **Bitter Pills**. NeoNET and Evo then work together to have the runners uncover other scandals committed by megacorps to take attention off them. One such scandal is research done on technomancers; exposing this information is part of the story of **Knives Out**.
- *The Japanese Alliance***:** The Japanacorps (MCT, Shiawase, and Renraku) compete fiercely in Japan but have been working together outside of those borders. A campaign could be based on the runners helping further the strength of this alliance. First, Horizon and Renraku work together to have the runners look into a report that a new release will fail in **At the Speed of Bad News**. Renraku then refers the runners to Shiawase, who have them look into research into technomancers in **Knives Out.** Assuming Shiawase is duly impressed with the runners, they "reward" them by sending them to the toxic sections of the Tsimshian Protectorate in **Running in a Toxic Wasteland**.

Those are only a few short ideas. Dive into a book for both a wealth of knowledge of what corporations in the Sixth World are currently up to, and information about the specific ways they will be screwing with each other.

Because good times or bad, that's what megacorps do.

MEGACORPORATE AUDIT

POSTED BY: MR. BONDS

Today, at 10 p.m. EST, the corporate world went ballistic.

While rumors have existed for two years—since an internal Corporate Court Committee assessment report was leaked by *Financial Times News* (I covered this in my blog back then)—today the Corporate Court finally got serious by announcing a Megacorporate Revision, an internal audit of all registered AA+ corporations that will put their status on trial

Holy frag.
Bull

After revising their own terms for qualification for extraterritorial or even megacorporate status (without going into detail, these have yet to be published, and may never be released to the public at all), the Corporate Court plans to re-evaluate all corporations within the next five years.

Naturally the Big Ten will make sure that they stay within the guidelines without anyone else qualifying for triple-A status. That would require them to create another seat, dilute the shares of the Zurich Orbital Gemeinschaftsbank, and further complicate the decision-making process in the CC, which can be quite dysfunctional at times.
€spion

JACKPOINT #MEGAWATCH FEED#

AA STATUS ON TRIAL?!

POSTED BY: MR. BONDS

A report leaked today by the Financial Times News Feed caused quite a stir in the megacorporate world, leading to major ups and downs in the global stock exchanges and significant drops in the stock prices of a number of smaller AA companies.

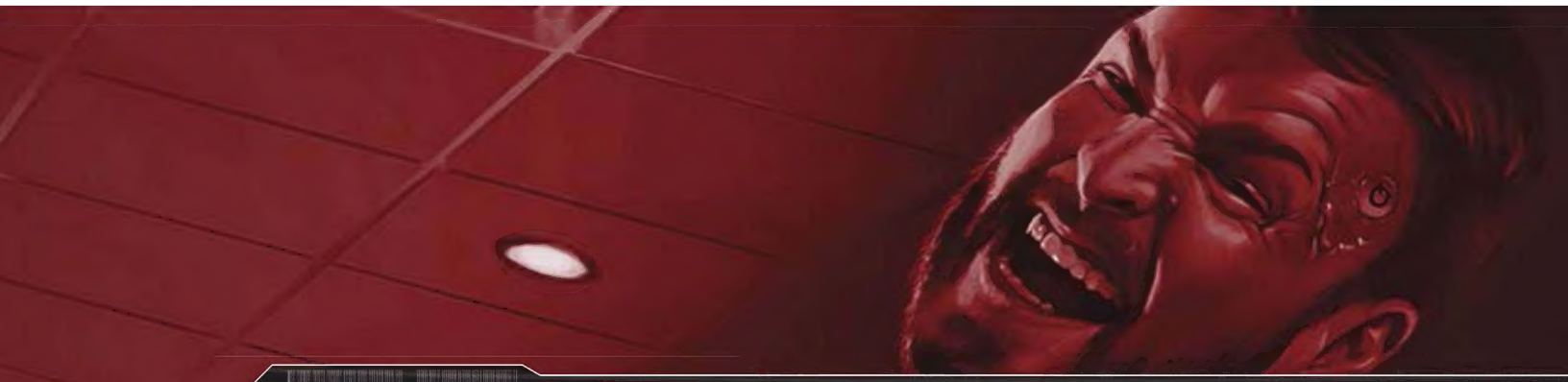
According to unknown sources, the Corporate Court is currently revisiting the process for multinational corporations to qualify for extraterritorial megacorporate status. Many suspect that the reforms of Matrix protocols and the authorization to build grid architecture based on corporate standing and abilities are the reasons for this revision, but others believe the recent re-evaluation of German AG Chemie, whose status had been officially challenged by major competitor Komatsu in 2071 (and supported by the Japanese megas), was the spur for the new debate.

Recent decades saw an increase in the number of AA corporations that—based on the Business Recognition Accords—were granted extraterritoriality by the CC and any signing nations. While there is no doubt that those corporations earned their status at the time using whatever processes were then in place, many economists have argued (especially after Crash 2.0) that both the process and the status of a number of those corporations are not up to date due to a lack of megacorporate supervision and changes in the global economy, including crises and economic recessions in a number of markets and countries.

If the rumors are true and the CC is aiming to review the status of all AA corps, it could throw the corporate world into turmoil. Most corps would risk everything to retain their high status—a status that includes armed protective forces, land rights, and jurisdiction over corporate holdings. And I don't mean just shadow campaigns to gobble up assets to strengthen their portfolios; I am talking about small corporate wars as well. This could result in the CC thinning the corporate herd a bit, leading to the strongest corps surviving and a general cleaner slate at the AA level.

Sources from our friends at Brokerage X, however, have told me there is another explanation. A lot of the larger, more established AA megacorps that never made the top slot (such as Z-IC, Universal Omnitech, Maersk, and Monobe) have been feeling disregarded and overlooked by the Corporate Court (especially with upstarts like Horizon moving past them) for quite a long time now. Using their leverage with Eurocorps (especially those politically active in the NEEC) or Japanese compatriots (Sony, Yakashima, Komatsu to name just a few), they have been campaigning for a reorganization of the Corporate Court with a "House of Commons" that would give a seat to all extraterritorial corporations ranked by the CC. The apparent leak and threat of status revision could also very well be a move by the Big Ten to silence a number of the lesser AAs.

This could get very interesting …



FINANCIAL TIMES NEWS 03/15/2077

CORPORATE COURT ANNOUCES MEGACORPORATE REVISION!

Today, at a press conference in the Towers, the earthly office of the Corporate Court in Manhattan, Chief Justice Lynn Osborne of NeoNET announced—in person!—that after a recent internal inspection of the terms of qualification for megacorporate status during AG Chemie's evaluation by a megacorporate working group, the Corporate Court has decided to perform a Megacorporate Revision. Over a period of five years, the Corporate Court will randomly re-evaluate the status of all registered corporations that qualify for international exterritorial rights based on the Business Recognition Accords (BRA). The BRA itself, however, will not be changed, and the agreements made with all the nations that signed the BRA over the past four decades will remain valid. The working group, under the supervision of corporate justice Emma Binghampton from Horizon, recommended that guidelines and terms—which essentially haven't changed since the ratification of the BRA—need to be adapted to modern global economics, reflecting the proper balance between functions such as manufacturing, design, and services. While diversification of functions is increased, diversification of sectors in which the corporation engages is now less important. This is potentially critical, as the lack of diversification had prevented a number of corporations from making the jump to AA. Now, though, focusing more on the pure value of the business will inspire a number of formerly overlooked businesses to try to upgrade their status. Chief Justice Osborne emphasized that although the Corporate Court acknowledged and will follow these recommendations in their assessment, megacorporate sovereignty is a privilege that is earned by corporations that have matured not only by their business value but as a corporate state and international relationships with corporations and governments (as observed in recent crises such in Boston or in the past with Chicago or during Crash 2.0) and is therefore awarded by the Corporate Court. Thus, while some criteria will be relaxed, the "overall standards for AA qualification may become higher." While the Chief Justice did not offer further comment, this remark has been interpreted by many analysts to mean that Corporate Court will set the bar higher while going forward with the upcoming Revision, and this could very well lead to some AA corporations losing their valued status, with all its implications. While the news caused some turmoil at the stock market, most brokers have commented on the revelation as "exciting news."

> What kind of brokers see volatility and unpredictability as "exciting"? Corrupt ones. If you're playing the game honestly, not knowing when a corp might get knocked out of AA status, which would likely send their stock, as well as many associated stocks, into free fall is a nightmare. If you're crooked, though, and get (or steal) advance information about Corporate Court decisions before they hit the public, you can make a mint in a real short timeframe. All they need are some runners to help them get that critical info on time.
> Cosmo

With regards to the process, CJ said in a Q&A session after the announcement that the first corporations will be asked in the next months to submit their documents to a specially formed Auditing Committee, which will provide a recommendation for the final decisions of the Corporate Court.

While this clampdown by the CC may come as a surprise to some of you, it actually isn't. It has been stirring in the corporate world for quite a while, deep under the surface of corporate politics and boardroom backstabbing. While the ancestral Big 7 (Ares, BMW, JRJ, Keruba, Mitsuhama, ORO, and Shiawase) paved the way for corporate ascension to exterritorial sovereign entities and were venerated for that for decades at Mount A-lympus, times are changing.

In the years following the BRA, many corporations were granted AA status. Some managed to take the next step into the CC, while some disintegrated. As an effect of so many corporations rising to power, merits of exterritoriality—such as state-like constitutions with corporate citizenship and the right to form armed forces and even whole standing armies—have lost much of the glamour they had when there were few corporations who exclusively possessed them. Sure, an AA can still control a government in an underdeveloped country, but competition is constantly rising and megacorporations are starting to overpopulate the sprawls and corporate enclaves. True global power

only exists in the Corporate Court, and even that has been challenged by apocalyptic terrorists during Crash 2.0 and by Great Dragons in the Dragon Civil War in the mid-'70s, with the Corporate Court often being too hesitant and too disunited to act concertedly against the threat that cost smaller corporation millions of nuyen due to the collateral damage of economic crises and dragon games.

> Not entirely true. In fact, the Corporate Court Crisis Coordination Committee ("C5") acted during Crash 2.0 and monitored the dragons on behalf of the Corporate Court. They only acted, however, to protect themselves, or when it was most convenient for them.
> Fianchetto

To fully understand the climate that inspired the Corporate Court to take this step, we need to look at the current conditions of each of the Big Ten. Each of them is going through some sort of tumult and upheaval, and that is the sort of situation that leads the powerful to lash out, to bring other groups down so that the gap between the top rank and the lesser ones remains unchanged.

Let's take them one by one.

ARES MACROTECHNOLOGY

Everyone knows about the Excalibur fiasco, but it has become clear that the problems shaking Ares go far deeper than one badly designed gun. The death of Nicholas Aurelius back in '75 left a substantial void at the heart of the corporation, even worse than the defection of Roger Soaring Owl. And time has shown that a leadership loss is great for exposing the faults a corporation had worked desperately to cover up.

Those faults keep coming back to one word: bugs. There has been a persistent theory that the Excalibur started life (under the leadership of Nicholas Aurelius, it should be noted) as an anti-insect-spirit weapon that didn't work for its original purpose, leading to it being repurposed. Though it continued to fail in its new purpose. Its failure, though, was not enough to pacify the bugs, who were incensed (if such an emotional reaction can be properly attributed to them) by previous Ares experiments and aggressions. The rumor is that the bugs have been waging a war against Ares in places darker than the shadows, and that war has been taking an increasingly steep toll. It is getting to the point where Ares may be willing to look for an endgame besides their preferred total destruction of the bugs, but that raises a particular challenge: How do you bargain with a bug?

> You don't. You eliminate them. If for some reason you can't, you try to feed them something that will sate them long enough to sap some of their energy. Just remember that it's not permanent—they'll eventually be hungry again.
> Sticks

AZTECHNOLOGY

On the surface, Aztechnology is strutting. They won the Azt-Am War, did some serious damage to the hated Sirrurg, and even managed to re-insert Aztlan into Denver, severely irritating Ghostwalker. But since those coups, they've been relatively quiet, which tends only to happen when Aztechnology has wounds to heal. The damage Sirrurg and Hurricane Donald did to Aztlan's food supply was lasting, and unsurprisingly, Aztechnology did not find many willing partners to help them relieve the stress of famine. While most of their food-production capabilities have been rebuilt, the scars are lasting. The masterful Aztechnology PR machine managed to convince citizens to scrimp and fast for a while as part of their patriotic duty, but eventually words lose their power to distract people from the fact that they are really hungry, and have been so for a long time. Or worse, that their children are malnourished or even dying. This means that Aztechnology has had to spend a lot of effort internally, rebuilding the fanatical devotion that powers the Aztechnology machine.

This means that when the CFD scandal broke, Aztechnology became very anxious to deflect any blame from them. They have funded a number of shadowruns looking to blame anyone besides them, and there are rumors they have manufactured evidence to prevent other people from assigning responsibility to them. Manufacturing evidence is nothing new for Aztechnology, and they're quite good at it. So far they are avoiding any direct blame, but in the massive information scavenger hunt that has followed the CFD outbreak, one connection has popped up numerous times: As part of the Dickens Program, Evo made an electronic version of Corporate Court Chief Justice Yoshiko Hino, and they used that creation to swing some important cases Aztechnology's way. The Dickens Program has been implicated in the whole CFD mess, and there are real questions about how much Aztechnology may have contributed to that research, and how dirty their hands may be. Until answers are more clear, Aztechnology is going to have to keep dancing.

> The citizens may have been hungry and angry, but there's no way they're going to do something like rebel. The threat of any possible unrest is overblown.
> Sunshine

> It's not about popular unrest. It's about managers and executives who have lost confidence in the parent company. Extractions are going to become more common, with willing execs arranging their own departure. If you have Big A managers as contacts, start working them.
> Cosmo

EVO CORPORATION

The crisis here is three simple letters: CFD. Even if no one thought Evo had anything to do with the outbreak, they would suffer, as the staggering drop in nanotech and genetech has carved deeply into their revenues. When you pile on top of that the fact that Evo's Dickens Program seems to be one of the origination points of the virus, Evo is in full-on crisis mode. They need to hope that no new revelations come out, they need to combat the rumors already swirling, and they need to totally revamp some of their core product lines. Other than that, all is well.

HORIZON GROUP

When Horizon was elevated to AAA status, there was a lot of murmuring that their rank was undeserved and they had been raised up over several other more worthy contenders (a lot of this murmuring, naturally, originated with many of those contenders). Now that Horizon has suffered a number of setbacks from which they have not recovered, the sharks are circling. If Horizon shows any more weaknesses, they are likely to strike.

The largest blows that Horizon suffered were siding with Amazonia in the Azt-Am War and the infamous massacre of the technomancers in Las Vegas. The former event was seen primarily as misfortune by Horizon execs, and while it inspired a number of studies re-evaluating some of their PR approaches, the war did not cause the same level of soul searching as did the Vegas massacre. The massacre went entirely against what Horizon thought to be its character. Everything about its central decision-making apparatus, the Consensus, was re-thought, including how it gathers information from employees to how consultations with it take place. According to internal sources, Consensus 2.0 has been in operation for about six months. Predictably, Horizon has not been open about the nature of the implemented changes, and while it is not the most urgent issue in the world, there is some shadow money dedicated to uncovering Horizon's secrets. You can be sure of this, though—should the revamped Consensus lead Horizon to any new stumbles, interest in this new Consensus will spike. And the sharks looking to knock Horizon out of the Big Ten will close in for the kill.

> Word is that the new Consensus operates according to certain baseline laws, which are not entirely dissimilar to Asimov's laws of robotics (first, do not harm Horizon; second, do not physically harm humans as long as the first law is kept; and so on). Which, of course, never led to any problems in his fiction.
> Sunshine

MITSUHAMA COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES

The biggest problem MCT faces wouldn't seem like much of a problem on the surface. You don't get to be a megacorporation without a fair number of people deciding they don't like you, so having a few thousand people who hate you is not a big deal for most AAAs. The trouble comes when those thousands are a) organized, and b) capable of hacking strategies for which spiders are frantically trying to figure out defenses.

Those people with the tremendous antipathy for MCT are, of course, technomancers. MCT was revealed as one of the prime experimenters on technomancers, including our own Puck. There was never any question that the technomancers would seek some kind of revenge—only what form the revenge would take, and how long it would be before they struck. I can't comment on the nature of the revenge, as no technomancers have seen fit to share it with me, but there are rumblings around the Matrix that some major hacking initiatives are about to go down, and that MCT should be concerned. Or, to put it in the words of one forum poster, "They're going to be buried in more shit than even those assholes can produce."

> If we want to know what's going on, why don't we just ask? Netcat doesn't seem like she'd be involved in this campaign, but I can definitely see Puck wanting in on it. So Puck, what's planned, and what's going down?
> Treadle
>
> I'm impressed that you think any sort of information would come out from you asking that.
> Puck

NEONET

Like Evo, NeoNET's problems are all about CFD. The shame of it all is that they had been doing well, with their recent acquisition of Manadyne giving them a huge boost in the magic business. Then CFD hit, and they have been reeling ever since. The extra twist that hit NeoNET is that the virus has affected their headquarters and leadership. As we here at JackPoint know, Miles Lanier has been infected and is essentially out of corporate action. Meanwhile, Boston has been entirely quarantined, so that NeoNET's headquarters has been locked away from the rest of the world. It seems that Richard Villiers and Celedyr were not trapped in Boston, so at least there is some leadership to help NeoNET move forward, but the talent drain of all the people stuck in Boston is severe.

On top of that, the whole Boston situation is inspiring a lot of people to attempt to place the entire blame for CFD on NeoNET. Someone is going to pay a severe price for this outbreak, and more and more people think that's

going to be NeoNET. The question at this point may not be whether NeoNET can avoid further punishment, but rather just how severe that punishment will be.

RENRAKU COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Recent years have not exactly been smooth sailing for Renraku, but they have not been exceptionally choppy, either. Compared to the struggles some of their peers are going through, Renraku is actually feeling grateful, like they are gaining ground on people simply by not suffering as much.

The main struggle for Renraku is building a positive identity. For years, when people heard the name "Renraku," they thought either "murderously out-of-control arcology" or "virulently racist megacorp." Neither of those elements work well as a core brand identity. Renraku has spent plenty of time seeking to build a new identity, but so far nothing has stuck. They are well known as a mid-level commlink manufacturer, but that is not compelling enough to build a multi-national brand. They have plenty of economic strength, and their partnership with MCT and Shiawase hasn't hurt anything, but it is clear that if Renraku is going to make a major move in the megacorporate world, they are going to have to do something bold. History has shown that when Renraku tries something bold, the rest of the world might want to duck and cover.

> If I had to guess, I'd say the main thing they want to do is cybermancy. They have plenty of cybersuites, and they can make good money on selling people as much 'ware as they can pack in. Plus I know a number of people who would pay a pretty penny to be able to slide in one more piece of gear.
> Dr. Spin

> That would be lucrative, all right—if anyone could get it to work consistently.
> Frosty

SAEDER-KRUPP HEAVY INDUSTRIES

There are some challenges facing Saeder-Krupp, but the bottom line is this: Saeder-Krupp remains the largest corporation in the entire world. That is a title they like, and not one they intend to give up any time soon.

The most significant challenges S-K faces are related to the fallout of the Great Dragon Civil War. While the title of loremaster does not convey all that much power beyond the circle of dragons, the loss of it stung Lofwyr, and some in his inner circle say his desire to regain the title—or punish those who took it from him—has led to some distraction from the hard work of moving S-K forward. Some of that work involves repairing wounds suffered in Dubai and GeMiTo, and there are whispers that the reconstruction of the Dubai headquarters in particular has been beset by construction delays, faulty materials, poor design, and a whole host of other problems that most people trace back to shadowrunners. If Lofwyr and his inner circle were fully on their game, the perpetrators of those runs (including shadowrunners, Mr. Johnsons, fixers, and funders) would have been dealt with quickly and ruthlessly. The fact that some of the perps survive and new runs continue to be staged is a clear indication that Lofwyr is not entirely on his game. How much his distraction will cost the corp remains to be seen.

> A great dragon is more than capable of planning revenge while running a megacorp. What appears to be distraction is likely a plan more subtle than we can understand. Be ready to shudder when the depth of his machinations becomes apparent.
> Elijah

SHIAWASE CORPORATION

Shiawase's great strength—their entanglement with the Japanese empire—is also an area of potential weakness. As long as Japan prospers, so does Shiawase. If the empire encounters trouble, then Shiawase is going to at least be distracted. If troubles are significant, they will have to pull back from other interests to take care of things at home. If things get really bad in Japan, then they get really bad for Shiawase.

Many people feel that is why Shiawase was so anxious to bring the Japanacorps into alignment—to keep the nation strong against potential threats. The question is, what threats? The answer is that there are many, but they are scattered. First, of course, is Evo, who is always willing to take a swipe at the Japanacorps. They have not been in any real position to do so in the recent past, but they are a willing ally for anyone wanting to get aggressive. Then we have Saeder-Krupp. They're not often thought of as a top rival to Shiawase, but that is because the two compete in an oft-overlooked but incredibly important field: agriculture. With the famine following the destruction of a large part of Aztechnology's food-production capabilities, agriculture became even more important—and lucrative. Neither Shiawase nor Saeder-Krupp sold anything directly to Aztechnology, but they competed heavily to take over contracts Aztechnology could no longer fulfill. Fields were burned, soil was salted, and many other nefarious deeds were undertaken in the course of that jockeying. It left deep wounds, and if Lofwyr is in a score-settling mood, Shiawase could be targeted.

Speaking of Aztechnology, the loss of agricultural contracts to S-K and Shiawase didn't make them too happy, and it especially angered one board member—Tsurnaga Shimoyama. Shimoyama has a long-standing feud with Renraku, and the recent alliance has made his anger extend to the other Japanacorps. Shiawase pulling

in significant increases in agricultural dollars did nothing to lessen his wrath.

These are formidable opponents, but they would become even more dangerous should they decide to coordinate their efforts. Their combined hostility could build into a tsunami.

WUXING INCORPORATED

If any single megacorp could be identified as the prime mover behind this Megacorporate Audit, it's Wuxing. They had spent a number of years cruising along, raking in the benefits of their expert geomancy, putting up photo after photo of the Wu quints, and increasing their influence in Asia while the Japanacorps squabbled over their island. But the Japanacorps have presented a stronger, more united front lately, while new trouble for Wuxing has reared its head: Maersk.

Maersk has nursed a grudge against the entire Big Ten for a while, feeling they should have risen to AAA level before Horizon, and they have particularly hard feelings against Wuxing, since they are their most direct competitor in the shipping business. Lately shadowruns have been very heavy in the shipyards of the world, with ports being damaged, cargo being stolen or destroyed, ships being sabotaged, and more. An awful lot of the damage has hit Wuxing, while Maersk has been largely unscathed. This has led many to believe that Maersk is behind the runs, acting on their old grudge to bring Wuxing down a peg. At this point the hostility seems to be more of an annoyance than a true problem, but it will be interesting to see how far Maersk decides to escalate.

Another interesting emerging situation for Wuxing is a business line they have entered into to help (or "help") other corporations deal with their various crises. Their many financial institutions have begun issuing short-term credit products with rapid approval, aimed at helping corporations deal promptly with emergencies that arise. The repayment plans and interest rates are generally appealing to the borrower, but there is a hidden kick. If everything happens on time, the repayment can occur without a problem. If there is even a small delay, though, penalty rates that would make a loan shark blush kick in. So far the borrowers have been careful to avoid these penalties, but the thinking on the streets is that Wuxing put these clauses in for a reason, and they intend to collect some serious revenue with them. Expect to see some shadowruns in the near future aimed at making it very difficult to fully repay these loans. If the penalty rates kick in, it will be interesting to see if Wuxing's fellow megacorps decide to pay—or if they strike back with weapons of their own.

> This isn't a future possibility—it's the present. Who do you think is funding all the runs against Saeder-Krupp's Dubai headquarters? Wuxing made a loan to help finance the construction, and now they're trying to delay it to make it hard for S-K to make repayment.
> Am-mut
>
> Doesn't seem like that great of an idea. They must be spending a lot on the runs—are they really going to make that much on interest payments to make it profitable for them?
> Mika
>
> In this particular contract, they get more than a large interest payment. If things are delayed long enough, they gain an ownership stake in the property—a property, I might add, that has an excellent location from a feng shui perspective.
> Am-mut
>
> Why would their lawyers let anyone from S-K sign that? Were they drunk?
> Dr. Spin
>
> No, just thoroughly out-magicked. To the point where they could not even prove magic use.
> Am-mut

As the above summary shows, several of the Big Ten have been wounded and distracted, and the AA great whites who have become tired of the constant affronts and paternalism by the Corporate Court have been drawn by the blood in water. They have already begun circling the big whales (even if these are orcas), waiting for an opportunity to make a (joint) kill.

> Especially the Frankfurt Bank Association, Maersk IA, Global Sandstorm, and Federated Boeing. They have made some bold moves in the past months against the megacorporate competitors and got away with it, sending quite a signal to the rest of the pack.
> Cosmo

The Megacorporate Revision has been the Corporate Court's liberating coup to keep the predators at bay at least for a while. While the revision period is five years, the first audits will likely take place in the next few months, meaning that some AA corps are already on the clock. The announcement has kicked off a power struggle in the lower corporate ranks, which I foresee will create some infighting and corporate skirmishes in the near future with plenty of opportunities for shadowrunners. Along with a strong possibility of blood in the streets.

Prediction: The other ones will be called in for revision early (yeah, *randomly*) will be either downgraded or buried in red tape and requests. Either way, they'll be distracted from their core work.
Kay St. Irregular

There is a good chance that runs will be staged against the Corporate Court, specifically the members of the yet-to-be-designated Auditing Committee, which will likely not be on up in Z-O but operate on Earth and will gather for meetings either in Zurich, where the gnomes of Z-OG have their office, or in Manhattan. Not only will these members have access to sensitive corporate documents every competitor would kill for, but they also will make a judgment on the value of a corporation based on the submitted numbers, something that is inherently subjective. Bribing or digging out dirt on these auditors could be quite useful, which is why the names are kept under tight wraps even within their own corporations.
€spion

Numbers don't lie.
Plan 9

Of course they do. As diversification (or categorization) and multinational presence has become less important, with powerful, specialized corporations emerging (Horizon being the best example) whose businesses rely on intangible products such as services (media outfits but also companies like Kolkota Integrated Talent and Technologies), designs/research/patents (e.g., Aegis Cognito, Tan Tien, Manadyne), or therapeutic health success (medical providers and pharma), the CC will purely assess the value of a business. In finance this is done by using multiple instruments such as assets valuation, historical earnings valuation, future maintainable earnings valuation, discounted cash flow, and many other tools, which can be inherently subjective depending on the tool and comparator. All those companies who make money with the "cool" and "hip" can have fluctuating business if they cannot find the next big thing before somebody else does. Horizon is the only one to succeed with such a business model and become AAA so far, due to their phalanx of cool hunters and talent scouts that scour the globe, along with the machinations of the Dawkins Group and Charisma Associates, which excel in creating memeplexes, brands, and public images. Bottom line is that there is room for interpretation—and runners will be hired to make sure that these will be exploited.
0111011001

PLUMMETING PROSPECTS

A GLITCH IN TIME

POSTED BY: SUNSHINE

You know about my fascination with commlinks. For the average person, the commlink remains the primary point of contact with their social universe. Every year a handful of megacorps call forth their subsidiaries to do battle on the stage of consumer opinion as the next new series of commlinks rolls off the line. This year the chatter is focused on three of the bigger competitors: Transys, Xiao Technologies, and Ares stalwart Leviathan Technical. With all the blood in the water over at Ares, I decided to go fishing through some of their less-protected subsidiaries to see if I could find any paydata. This juicy email left me thinking that Ares' problems are very far from over—and deeper than the average person on the street suspects.

//upload encrypted uniformat email
:: User Sunshine//
//running decrypt set Heavy Barrel//
Date: 12-16-76
TO: Jonas Franck, Leviathan
Technical Project Director
SUBJECT: Breach Detected

Mr. Franck,

I regret to inform you that an annual review of our security protocols at your location indicated a breach. Unfortunately the breach took place late last year and affected both digital and physical areas of your corporation. We believe this breach was carried out with the help of someone within Leviathan Technical, along with additional assistance from our own personnel. We have since apprehended the Wolverine employee involved.

Your Matrix and security records were scrubbed to eliminate all evidence of the intrusion. It is only thanks to our outstanding review protocols that we were able to locate the original theft after the fact. The affected datastore coincides with the breach of the physical assets. Specifically, datastore 38763 and the seventieth-floor security vault housing your LT 2110 prototype. Our asset did not know what was done to the prototype, but we can confirm it never left the vault. However, the design specifications stored in 38763 were copied remotely. When pressured, our asset revealed that a Leviathan Technical employee named Emerson Brady hired him to assist in the heist. With your permission we would like to interview Mr. Brady in order to explore what was done with those design specifications.

Thank you for your cooperation and patience in this matter.

Sincerely,

Elizebeth O'Dwyer
Wolverine Security
VP of Public Relations

Shortly after this email was sent, a handful of fixers I know started putting out feelers looking for anyone who had paydata to sell on Leviathan Technical. You can guess that they were less concerned about buying the paydata than they were about figuring out who funded the operation to steal the LT 2110 specs.

> This is why I tell you kids to steal only what Mr. Johnson sends you in there for. Sure, there might be a bunch of valuable paydata lying around, but all you are doing is leaving breadcrumbs that a corporation can trace right back to you.
> Slamm0!

Given the volume of new commlink models on the market every year, it could have been one of any number of corporations looking for an advantage. Ares is going to need to retaliate quickly if they hope to mitigate the damage that could be done to them if someone releases their specs before the release date. So far whoever stole the phone information has been silent.

> What's Wolverine's play in all of this? Despite the slick PR speak, a serious breach going undetected for a year has to be a black eye for them.
> Baka Dabora

> I think priority has to be recovering the missing data and figuring out exactly how the system was breached. Once that is handled, we can expect a none-too-friendly reminder that Wolverine Security is not to be trifled with. Unfortunately, Mr. Brady is likely to receive the brunt of that.
> Hard Exit

Knowing Ares, it won't be just about finding the culprit, especially not with the company already being seen as vulnerable. Still, with the Corporate Court sniffing around after the Excalibur debacle and the death of Nicholas Aurelius, their response is likely to be less of a Thor shot and more of a quiet punch to the gut of some offending corporation. Either way, there is potentially a lot of shadow work headed our way.

BACKGROUND

Ares is not having an epic year. The controversy surrounding the M-256 Excalibur coupled with the power vacuum at the highest level has turned middle managers into snipers and jackals desperate to either hold on to their positions or climb a rung on the corporate ladder. Plus, rumors persist that there is a rot at the core of the company that is making these other matters take on a greater weight than they otherwise would. In this environment any failure has the tang of blood in the water, even if the failure is the result of circumstance. For one Ares subsidiary, circumstances are about to get a lot worse.

Leviathan Technical is counting on their LT 2110 commlink to be the next big thing. However, it recently came to light that the LT 2110 specs were stolen and duplicated. Horizon's upcoming Singularity I commlink hardware and software are nearly identical to the LT commlink. To make matters worse, Horizon plans to release the Singularity I a week before the LT 2110 hits the shelves and at a lower price. What should've been a huge product release for Ares is quickly devolving into yet another failure, one that will surely cost jobs if not lives. However, if Leviathan Technical can get their commlink to market first, the PR gurus can spin the LT 2110 to look like the superior product, reducing the Singularity I to a shoddy knock off.

Two factors are working against Leviathan Technical's efforts: An inability to get their product to market any faster, and the inability to openly sabotage Horizon without starting a corporate war. The company's only option is to trigger a delay in Horizon's production schedule that is sure to push the release date back far enough to allow LT to get their product to market first. They must do so in a way that is invisible to corporate eyes but also exposes the basic flaws in the manufacturing system, so that production is slowed. In other words, the system needs to be sabotaged by way of social engineering.

With the help of Wolverine Security, LT identified five key figures spread out over three corporate locations responsible for keeping the Singularity I project on schedule. If at least three of these individuals is somehow made ineffective at their job, the project would immediately fall behind schedule. So shadowrunners are called in to deal with the five and find a way to limit their work effectiveness. These are fairly open-ended scenarios. The runners are given dossiers with information about the targets and suggestions on how to apply social engineering. The specific details are left up to the runners themselves.

Any direct assaults on the corporate locations means going up against Centurion Security (use Corporate Security, p. 382, *SR5*). The runner's must to avoid drawing the attention of the security forces. Once alerted, security will be on the look out for the shadowrunners for the duration of their time in that city.

The targets of this job live in three different cities: Seattle, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas. Two targets live in each city. As such the runners need to be able to travel between at least two cities in order to complete the mission. The runners will be compensated for travel between cities, but finding a way in and out as well as securing equipment on the ground is up to them.

For any stats needed for corporate individuals (besides security) in this adventure, use Mid-Level Corporate Suit, p. 157.

DON'T SWEAT THE TECHNIQUE

Social engineering means using psychological manipulation techniques to coerce or trick an individual into a desired outcome. The goal of the mission is to get close to the targets and manipulating them into poor work performance, or create scenarios that force them to question their own competence or even sanity. Multiple techniques can work on each individual, so it is up to the shadowrunners to decide the most efficient and discreet way to affect their targets.

PLOT POINT 1

I'M YOUR PUSHER

Leviathan's Johnson, Herman Otunga (use Mr. Johnson [Corporate], p. 157), chooses to meet a store under construction in a Renton strip mall. The windows are blacked out and two security guards are posted at the rear entrance. Inside the space is lit by temporary lighting and dominated by a fold up table in the center of the room. Mr. Johnson presents the players with a dossier of information on the company and the key individuals. He explains that any system is only as effective as the people running it. In this particular system there

AETHERPEDIA QUERY: SOCIAL ENGINEERING TECHNIQUES

There are myriad social engineering techniques designed to disrupt security designed to penetrate the weakest point of the security apparatus: the human element. The following examples represent the most popular techniques in use today.

QUID PRO QUO

In this popular strategy, the target is placed in a situation in which they are indebted to the perpetrator. Often this involves the perpetrator doing a favor the subject never asked them for, such as saving them from a dangerous situation, buying their debts, or returning an important item the subject lost. Once indebted, the target can be convinced to perform in-kind favors or other services as a means to repay the debt.

ROUND-THE-CORNER GAME

Despite recent advancements in gridlink security, the rate of delays and losses in automated vehicular shipments remains above that of manned vehicles. This curious statistic leads companies to rely on meat drivers to ensure sensitive shipments remain on schedule. However, meat drivers can be tricked. In this method the subject is convinced that the destination is somewhere other than where the delivery is scheduled to go.

SABOTAGE, ADVERTISE, ASSIST

Also known as a "white hat work-in," in this technique the individual deliberately breaches physical security or hacks a company's node as a way to prove that vulnerabilities exist. Once the individual gains entry, he reveals the vulnerability to the company with the intention of being hired on as a consultant or employee. Once inside the company the individual has greater access to the company's information than he was able to get through his original breach.

PRETEXTING

This tactic involves the perpetrator pretending to be someone in a position of power—often a police or corporate security officer. The perpetrator creates a scenario where the target is forced to reveal personal information under duress. That information can later be used by the perpetrator to impersonate the target or otherwise circumvent security.

PHISHERMAN'S FOLLY

Similar in style to Pretexting, phishing is a largely Matrix-based technique where the target is duped into inputting private information under the guise of submitting information to a valid source. Phishing techniques generally focus on spoofing the Matrix environment to convince the target that the sensitive data they are submitting is going to a legitimate source.

THE FIXER

Often the easiest point of entry to a secure site is to pose as a repairman. A sufficiently backstopped cover will allow the perpetrator to get inside the location and while working, access the lines and other info that is secured from external snoops.

BAITING

A standard tactic for breaching secured matrix locations, baiting puts the target in a situation where they 'find' a digital device containing something valuable (rare music, a trid clip, etc.). In order to access the media, the device needs to be loaded onto a system. Unfortunately for the target, the media also contains a trojan or some other backdoor opportunity to log on to the system. This tactic alternately be can be used with people being the 'found' object i.e. a honeypot baiting someone and then, once the target is engaged, getting the information or delaying the target in some powerful way.

This is best employed on low-level security workers who have access to secured hosts but low technical knowledge.

are five key individuals responsible for keeping the system on pace for the release date. If at least three of the six individuals can be rendered ineffective, Horizon will not be able to release their commlink on schedule. This isn't as simple as killing three to six people, however. All of the Horizon facilities in play utilize Centurion Security, and any worker deaths—accidental or otherwise—will automatically trigger a security review. This cannot happen. A security review would likely tip off the company and force them to rush the product to market—the opposite of what Mr. Johnson is seeking. Instead, the runners are directed to use any other means at their disposal to access these individuals and nudge them in a direction that slows down production.

PLOT POINT 2

REFINING SHALE

The runner's first stop is Seattle, where Horizon subsidiary Common Denominator is responsible for production of the Singularity I. Mr. Johnson's research indicates that there are two people key to keeping the project on track. Agatha Shale is the administrative assistant to the Vice President of operations. In truth she effectively is the VP, doing all of the organizational grunt work while her boss takes meetings and flashes a shallow grin. Without Ms. Shale present at work and handling her boss's responsibilities, the system would derail quickly.

Shale's dossier reveals an unusual and dangerous sexual appetite. Despite her advanced age for an ork (48), Shale advertises her availability on numerous dating nodes. She uses different false identities for each site as not to have her private life follow her back to work. The dossier also includes a psychological analysis suggesting that her sexual proclivities are largely a result of lack of recognition in her professional life, and it notes that she harbors a deep-seated resentment of her boss. In order for Shale to be rendered ineffective, she would need to be removed from her position for an extended period of time, such as through sickness, vacation, promotion, or firing.

The runners will find Shale to be very closed off professionally, but quick to unwind and engage in her secret lifestyle. She spends three nights a week at various clubs throughout the city, reserving the remaining nights for dates and the occasional BTL use.

The second Seattle target works at the same location as Agatha Shale but is several rungs down the payladder. Working in the trenches, Matthew Miller is responsible for domestic shipments to and from the Seattle Metroplex. Unlike Agatha Shale, Matthew Miller can be replaced. Should he lose his job for any reason, production would remain on track. Therefore the task for the runners is engineer Miller to make him a less-effective worker.

KNOWN TARGETS

Agatha Shale: Common Denominator, Seattle
Matthew Miller: Common Denominator, Seattle
Howard Timmons: Singularity, Los Angeles
Hector Ortiz: Singularity, Los Angeles
Stephen Leppert: Ramses Engineering, Las Vegas
Olivia Saito: Ramses Engineering, Las Vegas

Miller is a dutiful organizer who is brash, abrasive, and heavy-handed to his employees, but that attitude is what makes him effective. His dossier shows a man incapable of dealing with stress. He is currently being medicated for OCD; when the condition is not treated, his OCD causes him to overanalyze everything, making him ineffective in his job. He becomes a micromanager, double- and triple-checking everything. Fortunately, Miller is diligent in his medication to the point of routine. He is also hyper-aware of maintaining his daily routines, and he immediately recognizes anything out of the ordinary and raise alarms.

Miller's heavy-handedness extends to his family, where his delinquent son has been shipped off to a Lone Star-operated boarding school. According to the dossier, his wife has a lover, and she intends to leave Miller once she can store away enough nuyen to stand on her own.

PLOT POINT 3

SUPPLIER-SIDE ERGONOMICS

The runner's second set of targets takes them to the city of Lost Angels (see p 6, *Corporate Enclaves*). The city lost its Matrix in the crash of '64, but Horizon quickly stepped in and rebuilt the grid, becoming the de facto provider to the LA sprawl in the effort. Horizon's hold on LA represents a problem for the runners, because it will be difficult to do much legwork without someone with ties to the corporation recognizing that the group is preparing an op against them and tipping off Horizon so they can collect a finder's fee.

The two LA targets work for Singularity, Horizon's Matrix services clearinghouse. The company gained notoriety through its many academic and social-media net applications such as P2.0 (see p. 18, *Corporate Enclaves*) as well as award-winning ARO designs. Horizon chose to name their new commlink after the corporation in order to highlight how immediately familiar and social media-ready the platform would be. Singularity has also been the target of numerous hacks and physical intrusions over the past two years, leading to

beefed up security measures by their new security provider, Centurion Security.

Fortunately for Hector Ortiz, the new security firm didn't dig too deeply into the history of existing employees. Mr. Johnson's dossier on Ortiz claims he is a 99.7 percent DNA match to Humberto Gamez, a known drug dealer and member of the Burning Angels (see p. 50, *Corporate Enclaves*). In truth, Ortiz spent most of his young life as Humberto Gamez, a drug supplier for local street gangs in the area now known as the Deep Lacuna. After most of Ortiz's clients died in the quake of '69, he capitalized on the newfound anonymity to sever all ties with the gang world and try to make an honest living. Ortiz's dossier also claims he is an untrained social adept who traded in most of his potential for the ware common to matrix professionals. Hector works as a lead tester for social media software platforms. In order for the Singularity I to move forward, Ortiz needs to approve the embedded social networking software. If that clearance can be delayed for at least a week, it would push production back significantly. If Ortiz were to befall some type of injury or legal trouble, the project would be passed off to another tester and would not suffer any delays.

The second LA target spends as much time at his second job as he does slinging software for Horizon. Howard Timmons is the chief project manager for the Singularity I ARO packages. His staff is tasked with designing the eleven basic ARO skins that come with the commlink. Four of the skins are based on local sports franchises, while the other seven are based on shamanic medicine cards and animal totems, largely plucked from his visits to the PCC with his wife. The project is currently ahead of schedule. The only opportunities to slow this phase of the project at this point would be to significantly damage the ARO design or find some other way to force Timmons to go back to the drawing board and recommission ARO designs.

Timmons is a climber. His dossier reveals that ork rights is the seventh cause he has devoted significant time to and the first to survive one of his many promotions. In fact, once he'd earned himself a nod from Horizon for all the volunteer work he did for a cause, he'd drop it and find something new for his superiors to notice him doing. Timmons is married to an aspiring actress from the PCC who has struggled to get her big break. According to the dossier, her inability to earn roles is a sore point in their marriage, as he hoped she would help raise his corporate visibility.

PLOT POINT 4

RUNNING AND GUNNING ON THE STRIP

In the aftermath of the '69 quake, the neon-speckled fringes of Las Vegas became host to dozens of small engineering firms who'd lost their property when parts of LA sank into the Pacific Ocean. Though most of these startups cannibalized each other, a few earned a look from major corporations and were bought up. Ramses Engineering survived by filling its pockets with Horizon nuyen, but it is still on the books as a private corporation. The company sits in a district of office buildings and warehouses far from the glitter of the strip. The company is notable for its reverse-engineering capabilities and the ability of its scientists to improve on the designs of the items they reverse engineer.

Before the runners even have a chance to smell the fetid Las Vegas air, a man named Carson Doyle contacts them demanding a meet. Doyle claims to be a freelancer employed by their Johnson who needs to share crucial information. In truth he is working for Wolverine Security. The security company recently discovered that a man on the runner's target list, Stephen Leppert, had contact with the LT 2110 prototype, and they mean to bring him in for questioning.

Doyle's meet is in a strip club near old downtown. He lays out his plan for the runners and explains that he is coming to them as a courtesy and isn't asking for permission. Unfortunately, stealth is not the Wolverine way. Doyle's team intends to go in hard and capture Leppert for questioning. That tactic will throw Centurion security into high alert, making it impossible for the runners to get to Leppert or their other target, Olivia Saito. Doyle's team plans to move in twenty-four hrs.

The runner's dossier on Stephen Leppert explains that his company is presently running independent stress tests on the commlink to see if it can hold up or has any flaws. If any are detected, it will be up to Ramses Engineering to alert Horizon, effectively slowing the release date of the commlink. Leppert himself is underpaid administrative assistant to the testing team. He has been denied regular salary advancement multiple times. Recently he started talking to local headhunters in hopes of a corporate extraction. In truth his skills are limited, and he doesn't have the necessary ware package, personality, or looks to warrant a higher salary. All of this has him on the verge of becoming a disgruntled employee, which is why, as the dossier explains, security has assigned a surveillance detail to him.

Leppert is responsible for routing reports, and if he could be convinced to lose or misfile one or more reports, this would hold up the release of the phone until the reports are located. However, any mishandling of the reports will reflect badly on him, ending any possibility of a headhunter finding him a more lucrative opportunity elsewhere.

The second dossier details Olivia Saito. The thirty-year-old beauty claims to be related to general Keiji Saito of CalFree, using the clout of his name to open doors for her both professionally and in the Las Vegas underworld. Saito is 30K in debt to the local Yakuza and another 12K in debt with the Koshari. She is banned

from most casinos and spends her nights trying to connive her way into private games. According to the dossier, Saito is being watched by the Yakuza, though it isn't clear from the file if this is to make sure she doesn't skip town without paying her debt, or for her own protection.

In truth, Saito is paying off her debt to the Yakuza by arranging for a shipment of Singularity I commlinks to fall into the hands of the criminal organization. Her position as a director of Internal Audits gives her access to all the corporate accounts and shipping manifests. Legwork by the players through underworld contacts will reveal that the Koshari know about Saito's deal and plan to steal the shipment from the Yakuza and kill Saito for not offering the deal to them first.

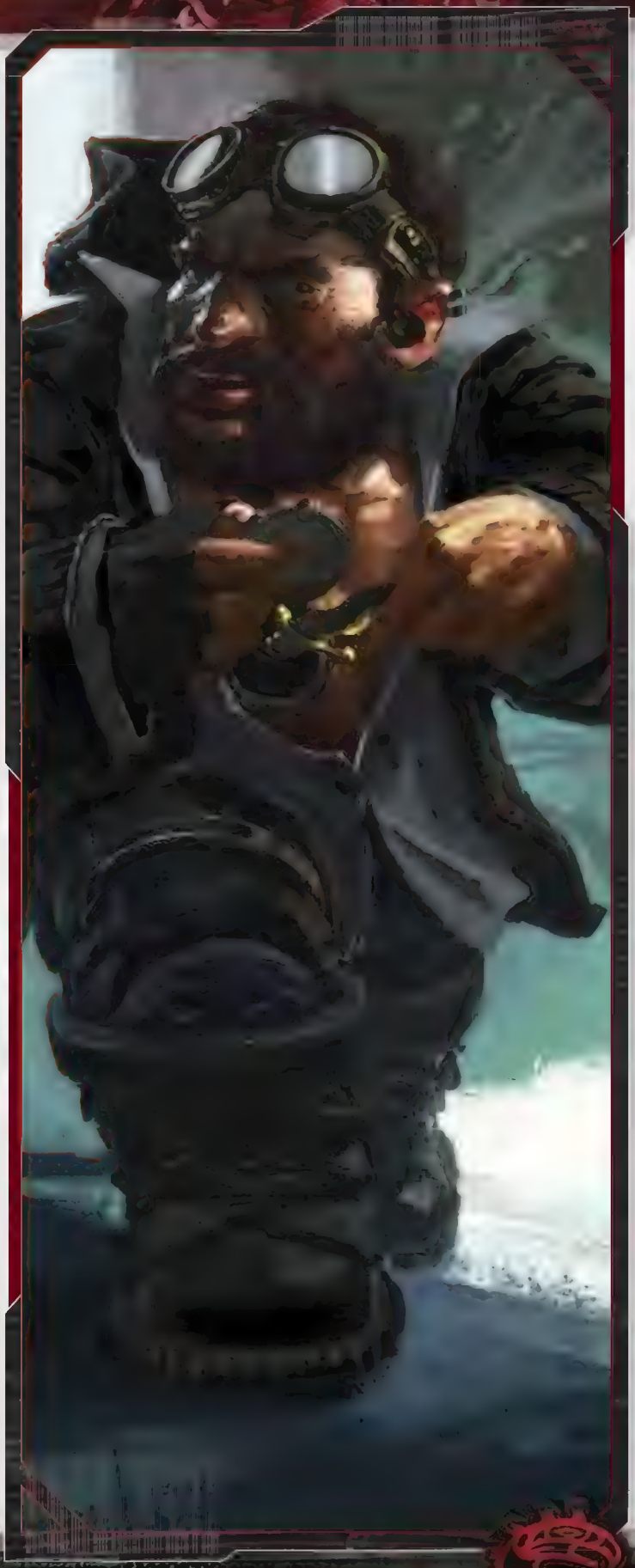
Saito can be very helpful to the runner's goals. She has the ability to trigger an internal audit that would raise questions about the commlink testing, forcing the firm to retest and delaying the release of the commlink by several days. However, Saito is extremely selfish. She would not agree to start an audit unless doing so benefited her in some way.

PLOT POINT 5

SO, DO WE GO WITH PLAN B?

Once the runners have completed the mission (successfully or otherwise), Mr. Johnson contacts them to meet back in Seattle at a private airstrip near Snohomish. If the runners were successful, Mr. Johnson congratulates them, explaining that this series of unfortunate mishaps created a tipping point that allowed his company an opportunity they would not have otherwise had. Days later the runners hear reports about the successful release of the LT 2110 and how it outperformed the Singularity I, which was a blow to Horizon. It is a win for Ares, but still not enough to erase recent disappointments.

If the runners fail to affect enough individuals to slow production, Mr. Johnson arrives late, appearing rushed and nervous. He quickly pays the runners for the delays they were able to make and expresses his disappointment that more could not be done. Before the runners leave the airport the see him hurriedly board a Gulfstream G150 and disappear into the night. Days later the runners hear that Singularity I sales are soaring through the roof and LT 2110 is seen as a more expensive and uglier version of the Horizon commlink, another serious blow to Ares' credibility on the public consumer market.



A PLACE TO HANG YOUR HAT

CASTING A NEONET

POSTED BY: ICARUS

NeoNET has been all over the news trids in the past few months. While most thought the epidemic in Boston would be handled quickly, it has turned into a situation on par with Chicago back in the '50s. Another lost American city and a megacorporation looking for sympathy for the loss of their property ... err I mean people. NeoNET has had a rough go, but they aren't some local Boston company torn apart by the quarantine—they are a multinational megacorporation with two of their founding megacorporations still intact back in their foreign homes. Don't weep for them, but open your wallets to happily accept their nuyen as they work to make up for some losses with a lot of shadowy dealings.

Outside of North America, NeoNET is doing fine. Their international businesses were barely affected by the events in Boston. Celedyr has shown that the big wyrm was not lost within the lockdown (or the cause of it, if the dragon rumors are true) and has returned to Wales to work out of the Transys labs there. Anders Malmstein made a statement shortly after the event and has spoken nothing on the issue since. He is happy to leave the troubles of North America exactly where they are. The brand recognition and sales of NeoNET-named products has had a significant increase in the Asian and European markets, but shadow ops for the corp in the European shadows have become a no-fly zone. Johnsons are striking terrible deals and scraping the bottom of the shadow-barrel for runners to work for NeoNET. Transys-Erika, on the other hand, has had a strong surge of runner loyalty and they've been paying well, especially for jobs against their supposed partner.

In Asia, the former Fuchi connections are smelling blood in the water and starting to snap at pieces of NeoNET left dangling too low. The result has been an uptick in work both for NeoNET to fend off the sharks, and for the sharks to keep nicking the wounded corp. The Japanacorps are not shy about working together these days when it comes to weakening an enemy for them to slaughter and share among themselves.

Around North America, NeoNET has been looking for new friends. Most people have accepted that NeoNET will be needing a new NorthAm Division home. The UCAS is trying hard not to lose the AAA, and a lot of federal runs have been focused on finding or creating a great place for the company to settle into. Though Seattle already has a home for every mega, they also already have the NeoNET Towers and a strong NorthAm divisional office to push toward. These efforts are being countered by both the CAS and California Free State within the UCAS, while the pair of nations open their arms to NeoNET businesses. While the CFS has had a lot of issues, including losing a big chunk to the PCC, they are looking for a big corporate backer to call them home and get them back on the road to national success. The CAS has been itching to snag an AAA for decades. They're courting both Ares and NeoNET right now and have a great chance to play the two off of each other as long as they don't push too far.

Rumors tying CFD to NeoNET are not helping their business, but luckily those who have even the slightest clue about its dark side make up about 0.05 percent of the population. On the bright side, a lot of the money that NeoNET is getting from their Encephalitis Cure support is going straight into finding a cure for CFD. Now, the reason I bring this up along with the stuff above about trouble in the mega, isn't because I think the curse of Villiers is about to shatter another megacorp. It's because I think NeoNET is going to come out of this smelling like roses because of all the bulldrek they're burying in their foundation. All this trouble is like fertilizer for the corp, and others have noticed. S-K, and therefore Lofwyr, have increased their operations against the number two mega in the world. Though they have never gotten along, the top dogs have avoided going after each other directly, knowing that too many hits would leave themselves open for others to take a swing at the kings.

We live in interesting times, boys and girls; get those armored jackets ready and call your fixer. The shadows need you.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Thanks to the events in Boston, NeoNET is in need of a new home. Since they know the true devastation of Boston and the small likelihood of its return, they are looking for something permanent. The problem is they can't be seen doing a lot of research on large plots of real estate or someone might put the stories together and catch on. Though the people at the top, the Corporate Court and several major megacorporate heads, know the depths to which Boston has fallen, the population of their corps and the rest of the world do not. That leaves NeoNET to utilize clandestine assets, a.k.a. shadowrunners, to do some of their site research and report it back so that those in power can make decisions as they will.

Each of the spots won't necessarily list out the runs specifically that will take place in that area but will instead provide several difficulties the runners can encounter. These are not intended to be a list of every barrier standing between the area and a shiny new NeoNET HQ. If the gamemaster thinks that a spot could have some other troublesome aspect, throw it in. If you or your team come up with some particularly awesome twists or wrinkles, be sure to share them at forums.shadowruntabletop.com. Who knows? You may help shape the future of NeoNET!

To start this scenario, the runners are contacted by a Mr. Johnson representing the interests of NeoNET. He won't hide the connection, but unless asked he won't say outright. He'll make references to recent events at their headquarters and a need for privacy, but he'll wrap all of that up in a nice tight offer of financial stability and security for the runners for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Johnson invites the runners to a meeting at a local upscale restaurant. He'll remind those who might need it of the social requirements of such a place and tell them to come prepared for dinner and a future job offer, nothing more. At the meeting Mr. Johnson will offer the runners a series of jobs that he will refer to as an "active paid interview." He wants the runners to spend the coming weeks, up to two months, doing some research for him in cities across the UCAS. The work is off the books and should stay quiet. The company wants to know the most up-to-date info for several areas across the country, such as gangs, criminal activity, value of property, local people of interest, politics, environmental factors, etc. His offer is 15,000 nuyen for each runner for the month, a UCAS citizen SIN, and a 50,000 nuyen expense account for the team to cover travel, lodgings, and dining. He will also mention a potential bonus for each member at the end depending on the results of the operations. This bonus would be a sign-on bonus in NeoNET corporate scrip if the runners take an offer to become Company Men for NeoNET at the same monthly rate. This may not work for every runner, so it can lead to a character retiring, a new campaign working for NeoNET, or a new campaign trying to stay off NeoNET's radar and showing them the runners can keep quiet.

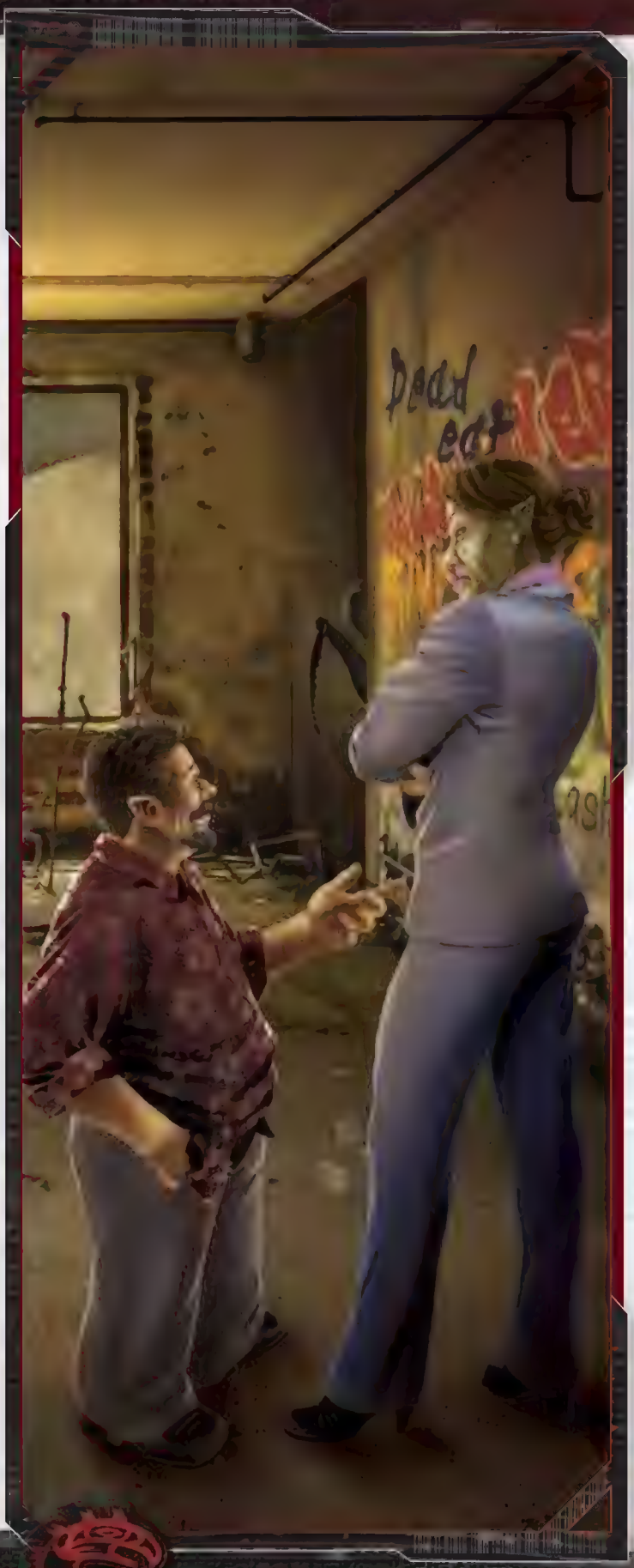
PLOT POINT 1

WE MUST EXPAND BEYOND OUR FUCHI ROOTS

The first location is in Seattle. Though NeoNET has their towers downtown, one of their many revitalization plans is to make a statement about their future by selling off the NeoNET Towers and building a new complex. They have their eyes on a spot near Lake Sammamish on the far side of Bellevue. It's outside of Downtown, but that's actually a big draw. The location can become all NeoNET. They can bring in good will with a resurgence of jobs in the area, offer to help clean and improve Redmond (which is just across the lake), and be far enough outside of town to really stand out, plus be close to a place that is great for off-the-books work.

Standing between NeoNET and their new breath of life in Seattle are a wide variety of interesting and mundane obstacles. Since the objectives for these jobs are not to clear anyone out or actually make any deals, the runners will have to walk the fine line between gathering information and making people curious.

There are five major groups or threats to a NeoNET expansion into this area. The first threats are the local street gangs. This section of Bellevue is close enough



to Redmond that many of the negative influences of the Barrens seep over into the local youth. To the corpkids that have to live out here, joining a gang looks a lot more exciting than the monotonous daily grind of living with mom and dad. The street gangs in the area are mostly local teens, but every one of them is led or directed by some more-experienced gangers on the other side of the lake or up in Touristville. The biggest trouble the runners are likely to have when trying to feel out the gangs in the area is trying not to choke out a teenager with a big mouth. Though law enforcement doesn't like gangs, they'll look past the colors to get a runner or even a company man in their sights, hoping to maybe turn the incident into blackmail they can use at a future time. In the runners' area of interest are four main gangs: the **Centaurs**, a motorcycle "club" all riding modified H-D Scorpions; the **Drakes**, a group of dragon-worshippers idolizing Kalanyr's Isotopes but happy to not hang out in an irradiated wasteland; the **Emerald Angels**, a rather pleasant-sounding group until you realize they worship the angel of death and the idea of chemical warfare and are a bunch of drugged-up street hooligans who use green-tinted gas grenades; and the **True Breed**, a group of human hate-mongers with some serious money and connections who buy augmentations after they intentionally dismember themselves ... repeatedly.

The next steps up the chain from the street are the various crime syndicates that wouldn't want a megacorp out here interfering with their business ventures. Though Lake Sammammish is located completely inside the Seattle Metroplex, several smuggling operations run across its waters from the wilds of Redmond to the streets of Bellevue. Every major syndicate has some operations in Bellevue that a new resident megacorp would upset. The difference between the gangs that would lose their homes or turf and the syndicates is that the syndicates will see the massive influx of cash as a gain in the long run as long as certain deals can be made in advance. While the gangers will be mouthy, the mobsters are going to be pushy. They're going to want the runners to go back to their corporate masters and start working out deals. They'll also be looking for names so they can start the dirt-digging work now. Since the runners are supposed to be doing all this anonymously, the mob is not going to be happy.

Moving up to the third tier brings us to local government. Runners will need to snoop around the Bellevue City Hall and see if the local mayor, aldermen, city workers, building inspectors, and the like are amenable to grift, convincible through blackmail, or replaceable through sabotage. Getting close to some of these guys requires getting past protection, and some feel they are protected through deals they currently have with other benefactors and may retaliate against the runners or get the runners tagged as trouble by other megacorps, local law enforcement, or the local criminal element.

Similar to the local government but a whole different

animal are Knight Errant and other local security companies. Smaller outfits like Wolverine and Hard Corps are not going to want NeoNET bringing in Minutemen to possibly poach contracts in the area. Along with that, Knight Errant is not going to want to lose another chunk of property near Redmond to extraterritoriality. They'd probably be fine if the corp were MCT and they knew fleeing criminals would be handled with zero tolerance, but another area for gangers, runners, and other street scum to duck into to muddle their authority is not high on their agenda. Once the runners start asking questions, those questions slowly work their way through the grapevine and up the chain of command to ears that might reach out to the runners to ask why they are so curious.

The last level of obstruction will come when the runners have heard enough to know that two local adult dragons have interests in the area and may be opposed to a corp setting up shop. Kalanyr and Urubia are two dragons with interests in the Redmond area. Depending on how pushy or flashy the runners have been about asking questions, the dragons may not have heard of them or may be well aware of their efforts. If they're been overt, the pair may even issue an invitation to meet. Urubia will invite the runners to meet at the Funhouse, her lair and headquarters in Redmond. Kalanyr will invite the runners to one of his two Stonehome castles to impress them.

The pair are very different. Urubia is a draconic mother figure to the gangs she is uniting and the people she is gathering. She'll be cordial to the runners and offer entertainment and food while working to manipulate them into thinking she is their friend and won't misuse the information. Kalanyr is a scientist and a businessdragon. He's far more methodical and not at all soft or mothering. He has very little tolerance for disrespect. He'll be direct and expect direct answers. He isn't likely to kill the runners if they refuse to talk (unless they're rude) but will start digging into their lives after they are gone.

PLOT POINT 2

HEALING THE ACHE

If you can't save your own headquarters, why not finally revitalize the former headquarters of another megacorporation that got seized by the government after a rogue AI took over the place? NeoNET is looking into revitalizing the Arcology Commercial and Housing Enclave (ACHE), formerly known as the Renraku Arcology, and taking the problems off the hands of the city. The runners are here to get some data on the place to help determine some of the more difficult-to-ascertain fiscal ramifications of taking on the massive structure. While working out in Bellevue required a lot of political pandering, this job has plenty of hands-on work. There will still be a fair share of political land mines to dance around, since the runners will be expected to get opinions about the ACHE from Downtown and Metroplex politicians. If NeoNET goes forward with this plan, they'll need to know where to apply pressure for best results.

The ACHE is a massive complex that can house anything the gamemaster feels they need. Entire campaigns can play out inside the sloping walls of this monstrosity because it is an entire neighborhood, really a small city, unto itself, complete with mysteries and locked-down floors and sections.

Inside, runners may have to deal with a range of obstacles, including the gangs in the ACHE; ghouls using the place as a farm of sad and expendable individuals alongside the organleggers; residents who aren't too keen on losing their home even though it is a social nightmare; technomancers looking for the Deep Resonance or Dissonance pools in the networks; and secret megacorporate research labs hidden within the massive labyrinth that are using the residents as guinea pigs.

The runners can come across or in contact with any of these groups as they explore the ACHE trying to get scans of the structure; identify areas of reconstruction or remodeling that may have been less than skillful; gather population figures through crowd reading programs; identify any pest infestations; analyze the current Matrix infrastructure; and ascertain the Astral damage the place has undergone.

Outside, runners will need to get the inside scoop from the UCAS government that doesn't need another corp throwing the Arcology title on the building and bringing back reminders of the terrors that occurred here; determine which Seattle politicians are looking to hold on to this federal subsidy moneymaker; and dodge Renraku, who is always trying to keep their former icon from falling into another mega's hands because they know that secrets still hide in its darkest corners. Each obstacle poses its own social problems, and Renraku will not be shy about trying to convince the runners of the error of their investigative ways.

PLOT POINT 3

~~BUG CITY~~ CHI-TOWN BANDWAGON

Chicago is the place to be if you're a runner with a taste for adventure in the 2070s. The bugs are "cleared," the wall is "open," and megacorporations are pouring nuyen into the shadows to see what they can salvage, steal, sabotage, or sink in the lake. With properties around the city being reclaimed, NeoNET wants to see if some pre-CZ Fuchi facilities might be easy to reclaim or offer offsetting profits in the reclamation. This plot point presents an opportunity to run a few adventures from Season Five of *Shadowrun Missions* between events to lengthen the overall campaign in the city.

NeoNET has two areas they want the runners to

check out. One is on the border of Westside and Southside, near the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, while the second is inside the Core, a few blocks inside the former CZ. The locations are both dangerous, and the runners are going to have to brave more than just the struggles of the feral city.

The location between Westside and Southside is in the former town of Willow Springs between 87th Avenue and Archer Avene. The area is surrounded by forest preserves that have over time attracted a large number of refugees who lost their homes. The water supply of the canal and the food from deer and wildlife in the forests drew them from all around. The location is within territory still claimed by the Human Brigade. There are no metahumans in the region, so any metahuman runners are going to stick out if they come out in the open. This particular area has a large number of skilled hunters and trackers (use **Humanis Tracker**, p. 157) who spend a lot of time out in the woods, risking the runners being caught if they're sneaking in or hiding in the forests. As for the standing of the area for NeoNET's purposes, the runners need to report that a large force of militant humanists control the area they want, as well as the area surrounding it for miles.

Location number two is the former Fuchi Tower in the Core, a place that died even before Fuchi did. Since then the building has been looted extensively, first by scavengers looking for Fuchi tech and later by people looking for anything that will burn to keep them warm or use as a weapon. The same is true of most of the megacorporate towers of the Core with the exceptions of areas where the bugs set up hives and nests. These structures are huge and full of nightmares for anyone who lived in Chicago during the CZ.

For the runners coming in now, these buildings are skeletal husks filled with strange empty places and alien landscapes. Many of these places are not as empty as they appear, filled with paracritters, mad survivalist squatters, bug-worshipping maggot cults, insect spirits that have survived, vampires hiding in the dark, and ghouls stalking the towers for food. The entire time the team is moving through these shattered towers, they should feel uneasy. There is no power, and the building is packed with dark places the sun never touches. There are two main ways into the Towers: the tracks, including the SkyTrack Monorail and "L" train tracks, and a path through the undercity.

The SkyTrack is what's left of the monorail cloverleaf that was split when the wall went up. It's a dangerous way in from Southside as the runners will have to traverse the gap, but inside the cloverleaf connects to parts of the "L," and the runners can walk into the Core without setting foot in the darkness below.

Below the seventh floor of all the buildings in the Core is the undercity, where small groups of survivors have gathered and still live but rarely venture up, afraid of what might follow them back down. The undercity never sees more than slivers of light from the sun at high noon in summer. Most of the residents of the undercity are metahumans, particularly trolls and dwarves, as a lack of power, combined with a lack of sunlight, makes even the low-light vision of elves and orks useless, and humans are blind without an artificial light source. The various corporate towers all look alike from undercity, and few know which is which. The runners will need to hire a guide to find their way up or choose any tower and get up to the higher floors and skybridges to cross over.

All the towers are similar in their level of decrepitude. They've been scavenged and scoured with the lowest floors picked to bare walls and beyond, and the floors going up become slightly more intact as you rise. Completely intact areas can be used as frightening glimpses of the past being maintained by something that has kept all the scavengers out. Free spirits (see **Free Spirits**, p. 202, *Street Grimoire*) or ghosts (see **Shadow Spirits**, p. 91, *Street Grimoire*) attracted to these locations can be a nice aside to chase the runners or teach them that there are darker creatures in the shadows than they.

Exploration of Fuchi's Tower will take quite a bit of time if the runners do a thorough and careful job. The building is over three hundred floors. Those in love with the dice can make an Intuition + Perception [Mental, 1 hour] Test. Each hit covers one floor in that hour. Runners working together can make a Teamwork Test. For this test, record the number of ones rolled and keep a tally. Every 10 ones should create an encounter of some kind to keep the runners on their toes. This job will take days and may require the runners to make decisions about where and when to stay or when to head back for supplies.

The work reveals a solid infrastructure ready for remodeling. The upper floors are devoid of mundane life, but they are high above the ground and far from water and food. Centered around the elevator shaft on the 254th floor is a small wasp spirit (p. 93, *Street Grimoire*) hive. Though small in number (12; Queen, Nymph, 2 Soldiers, 2 Scouts, 3 Caretakers, 3 Workers), these are the survivors and the strongest of their kin (Force 6 to 10). They can be avoided by skirting the edges of the floor and avoiding the elevator shaft.

PLOT POINT 4

MENDING FENCES

St. Louis is a city on the verge. Whether that verge is collapse, civil war, reunification, corporate growth, or any of a dozen other major events is up for debate, and opinion often shifts like the weather. This shifting only slows when a large enough portion of the populace, both national and corporate, get on the same page. This unity only occurs when enough graft or emotional sabotage has been pumped into the locals to sway them to the cause. This means NeoNET needs to know

what the people are thinking and what pushes their buttons; which politicians are amenable to monetary plying and which will need a firmer hand; which other corps are trying to push agendas and what those agendas are; and who they can trust in the city to help them pave the way for a better tomorrow.

The will of the people can be found anywhere, but the runners will need to visit a variety of places in order to avoid getting only a small sample or a skewed view of opinions in St. Louis. The current hot topics in the city are UCAS/CAS relations and talks of reunification, the possibility of becoming a free city, the increase in shipping with the loss of Boston as a port city, rumors of a river leviathan in the Mississippi, construction in Chicago threatening the growth of St. Louis or its bid for independence, and the possible increase of criminal elements in the city drawn to its growing shadows. Poorer areas are more concerned with being left behind if the city goes corporate or independent, especially those on the outskirts of the local metropolitan area or on the wrong side of the border if St. Louis favors one of the nations. Groups like the True Americans, New Revolution, and Sons of the South can be found in their local hangouts or looking to have a conversation with nosy runners.

When politicking the politicians, the runners are going to have to be careful not to give away too much information. The politicians are going to want to know which corp is behind the runners, and lying could be just as bad as telling the truth. The politicians in the city are trying to walk the narrow line of public/corporate/personal balance and deliver a lot of doublespeak and noncommittal promises. Whatever gets them the most money and re-elected, or enough money not to care about re-election, or a corporate job that pays as well as re-election, is what they are going to do, and the exact option they are pursuing can change by the minute. Politics in this city are hot, rife with corruption, and a perfect place for runners to get all caught up in other people's dirty laundry.

The machinations of the corporations are also running rampant in the city. Every corp with an A or better rating has something in the works in St. Louis. The **Japanacorps** are spreading their new brand of cooperation; **Ares** is looking for some wins and is pushing both the "Go America" theme of reunification and the "Southern Pride" angle looking for a new major client; **Aztechnology** isn't keen on a merged America because they don't need any more border trouble from an Ares-funded American expansionist movement; **Wuxing** has a strong interest with their shipping concerns; **Saeder-Krupp** sees the free city concept as a construction dream; and the runners hear rumors about **NeoNET** looking to make a new home with an arcology built over the river, like another arch.

The most dependable of the despicable shadow denizens are chomping at the bit and are up to their eyeballs in work with all the drek being slung around the city. Crime syndicates are fighting for control of smuggling, gambling, entertainment, and illegal substances as well as territorial disputes, with control shifting like the sands of the Sahara. Everyone in the shadows is using every fake SIN with a vote to push for the free-city concept and absolutely no reunification of the UCAS and CAS.

A few other kinds of problems might crop up. Runners who are too nosy might run afoul of local policlubs or movements that are very interested in knowing why the runners are poking around. The highly transient population of the shipping town has fear of CFD creeping in, creating distrust for outsiders.

PLOT POINT 5

BREAKING GROUND

The last little piece of business the runners are being held responsible for will be checking out a pair of sites, one on each side of the river, and therefore one in each of the two nations. The two sites are directly across the river from each other and are located around the Eads Bridge and Martin Luther King Memorial Bridge. Both areas have some current occupants who will not take kindly to runners snooping around their business.

On the St. Louis (CAS) side are the friendly neighborhood tin stars. Thanks to the Grimm Trolls (see the next paragraph) and the presence of the border in the center of the river, Lone Star has a precinct here along with a CAS Customs and Immigration office. The surrounding area contains pubs, shops, and small stores. Both Lone Star and Customs have officers watching traffic on the bridge, and they often detain and search anything they deem suspicious. They usually keep the Grimm Trolls to their own half of the bridge, but an occasional bribe allows some trolls to cross when they're running security. Handwave stops are common with these runs, and while they are often cursory, an occasional rookie has had to be fished out of the muddy Mississippi for pushing against the authorities a little too hard.

On the East St. Louis (UCAS) side is a gang known as the Grimm Trolls. They're a go-gang of sorts, but they really only go along the short distance of road leading up to the two bridges in the area. This small (sixteen-member) band of orks and trolls collects tolls, protects or stops smugglers depending on who paid what, terrorizes the occasional SINner, and provides security for "The Castle." The Castle is actually Castle Entertainments' Coins of the River, but no one calls it that unless they are from way out of town. This place is a casino, hotel, and "entertainment" house in the themed style of the Vegas casinos. Using the river as a moat to keep out undesirables and the bridges surrounding it as drawbridges, the place does a good business as long as it keeps the Grimm Trolls happy. It is also smack dab in the middle of the property that NeoNET wants checked out.

RUNNING IN A TOXIC WASTELAND

ShadowSea article, posted February 12, 2077

Attention, hackers and fixers out there in the shadows: A subsidiary for a triple-A corporation is looking for a solid runner team to contract for work. This runner team must be capable of successfully working in hazardous toxic environments found in the North American nation of the Tsimshian Protectorate. This job will require shadowrunners to work over an extended period of time, at least ninety-seven days. This job could go longer, depending on any delays encountered at the designated work site. The team chosen for this job will be well compensated with generous hazard pay on top of normal compensation; they must provide their own supplies, armor, travel arrangements, and ammunition. The employing subsidiary assumes no responsibility for the safety or welfare of the shadowrunners hired for this job. If a fixer responds to this posting and successfully recruits talent for this job, they will receive a 10,000-nuyen finder's fee.

Seven days before the work is scheduled to begin, the runner team will be expected to be on the ground at the designated coordinates to clear the area of immediate threats. These threats will likely be magical in nature, including but not limited to toxic shamans and free toxic spirits. The runners will need to clear out this area of these priority threats before actual work can begin with the subsidiary's field experts and specialists.

Once work has started, our shadowrunners will be required to keep our field experts and specialists safe from ongoing indigenous threats. This will generally mean paranormal critters, including normal, toxic, and mutated critters, but this could also include hostile confrontations with indigenous persons. More info on this will be provided at the time of the meet. Other tasks may be assigned to the hired runner team as needed based on conditions out in the field.

If your team is interested in this job, or if you as fixer know of a team capable of successfully carrying out the work, please contact Mr. Johnson at commcode 99-028-7748-23 to schedule a meet. The team must be hired and ready to go within one week.

Tsimshian? You gotta be fucking kidding me! There's no way I would *ever* step foot in that death trap/toxic waste dump.
Arete

I took a job there almost two years ago, when the nation was holding national elections for the Council of Chiefs. I'm telling you, I will never take a job in that part of North America again, nor will I ever recommend working in that nation to anybody. The nuyen just wasn't worth it. The air is putrid. It makes your eyes and lungs burn constantly. It's amazing anything not toxic or mutated actually grows there. The landscape is pockmarked by hundreds of contaminated sites, with abandoned chemicals seeping into the ground and filtering into the air from all the abuse MCT inflicted on the land. Tsimshian might be *finally* getting its act together to fix some of these problems, but it's clearly not going to be enough, not with the extent of the damage on those lands. On top of everything else, on that job I came down with an upper-respiratory infection, and it took me two months to get over it completely. The bug I had was both arcane *and* antibiotic resistant. And during that entire time, I felt like hell. Enter that country at your own risk, chummer. The way I feel about Tsimshian, I think I would rather take a job in Aztlan.
Pistons

So what corporation would be stupid enough to try to work in Tsimshian? It seems to me no amount of nuyen would be able to make such a venture profitable, especially if the native population is as hostile toward outsiders as we're led to believe from various postings on ShadowSea. With something like this, you're just asking to have your equipment sabotaged, and your personnel killed in violent protests.
Kia

From what I've been hearing with my neo-a contacts, Shiawase Envirotech accepted a thirty-five-million-nuyen contract from the Council of Chiefs. And yeah, don't ask me where they (the Council of Chiefs) got the money to offer such a contract. With their economy in ruins, the

Council of Chiefs must have tapped some off-the-books revenue streams for this operation. And it's clear Shiawase Envirotech is cutting corners with this job to save on money, such as relying solely on a runner team to protect the operation instead of using a fully equipped corporate security force. I mean, if runners get hurt or die, who the hell cares? They won't have to invest in health care for the runners, compensate family members for their deaths, or worry about burial expenses. There's a high probability this job will go south for whoever takes it, because they won't be equipped to deal with all the problems that could arise with this job. If you go on this potential suicide run, make sure all your affairs are in order. Because you're probably not going to be coming back.
Slamm-0!

Another problem Mr. Johnson won't tell you is that the indigenous people of Tsimshian are hostile toward megacorporate interference in their country, and quite rightfully so. It won't matter if Shiawase is attempting to legitimately help the nation, all the vast majority of the citizens of the Tsimshian Protectorate will see are Anglos who've have had a track record of mutilating their national lands and stealing their natural resources. The best-case scenario is that there will be peaceful protests at the cleanup site. Worst-case scenario is that there will be bloodshed.
Mika

Won't the Council of Chiefs provide some kind of security force to ensure this job is successful? You would think they would want to try to ensure this project is successful to give them positive PR with their constituencies that they are sincere in their desire to clean up this mess, and would make it that much more likely these efforts to clean up their country continue to move forward. Assuming, you know, their efforts are sincere.
Hard Exit

Provided their constituencies aren't made up of toxic shamans. But all joking aside, even if they assign a contingent of Tsimshian police to help the runners maintain the peace and safety of the Shiawase work crew, how can you even trust their motivations? Chances are they're going to be sympathetic with the locals who don't want a megacorporate presence in their nation. So it'll be no skin off their noses if they allow a couple of troublemakers to get past the perimeter, and let them into camp to cause mayhem. And even if they aren't sympathetic with those causes, there have been rumors that Tsimshian has been having trouble paying their police force. In the absence of pay from the government, there could be others who are paying for their services; others whose intentions are to sabotage this cleanup effort. These goons could be as dangerous as any other toxic threat found in that environment, as they will be working under the color of authority.
Thorn

On the upside, though, you'll be working in a nice open space, where you will be able to bring along the toys you've always wanted to play around with, but haven't been able to since you can't legally use them in an urban setting. Besides, you'll do no more damage than what is already there, so have fun! Go at it! The bigger explosions, the better!
Kane

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Tsimshian Protectorate is a semi-autonomous Native American state in the northwest part of North America, currently under the oversight of the Salish-Shidhe Council. Decades of conflicts have turned these two neighboring peoples into bitter enemies, with enough animosity built up between them that any small provocation could lead to war. One simmering point of tension has been the toxic conditions of the Tsimshian lands, which were turned into festering cesspools of chemicals by abandoned strip-mining operations, logging operations, and toxic waste left behind by Mitsuhama Computer Technologies, who was given free rein to rape and pillage the land. The air, ground, and river water contamination has slowly seeped across borders and is threatening the pristine lands of the Salish-Shidhe Council. Tsimshian's Council of Chiefs is under tremendous pressure to do something about this major problem. Although smaller environmental groups have attempted to clean up the devastated environment, the problem is too widespread for them to make much of a difference. The problem requires the resources of a triple-A megacorporation. To avoid an armed conflict with their neighbor, the Council of Chiefs has scraped together enough nuyen from their cash-strapped economy to buy the services of Shiawase Envirotech. The contract calls for Shiawase Envirotech to clean up a toxic waste dump sixty kilometers outside of Quesnel, a small city between Tsimshian and the Salish-Shidhe Council. This site is close to the Fraser River, and its contaminants are slowly leaching into the river and being carried over into the SSC. This job will require the runners to clear out the work site of significant threats, and to provide security for the clean-up crew for the duration of the project, which is around ninety days.

As the runners will soon learn, no matter the well-meaning intent or goals of any project, particularly those led by a megacorporation, there will always be someone opposing it who will use any means available to stop the project from going forward. Even if that opposition comes from as high a place in the Tsimshian government as a sitting member on Tsimshian's own Council of Chiefs.

For additional information on the Tsimshian Protectorate, refer to *Dirty Tricks, Sixth World Almanac,* and *Shadows of North America.*

PLOT POINT 1

THE MEET

The player characters may be recruited by any one of their fixers to meet with Mr. Johnson from Shiawase Envirotech. Or if the gamemaster prefers, the group's hacker may find the job posting on ShadowSea and contact Mr. Johnson at the commcode given in the advertisement to set up the meet.

The Shiawase Envirotech Johnson, a young human male in his late 30s (use the stats for **Mr. Johnson (Corporate)**, p. 157), will explain precisely what the job entails, beginning with the fact that it will cover an extended length of time. Mr. Johnson explains that this job will cover an extended length of time. The team will need to arrive at the contaminated site seven days before the Shiawase Envirotech crew starts work, and they will need to clear out the most pressing threats. The work site is located sixty kilometers to the northwest of Quesnel. The geography of the site is an open plains environment close to the Rocky Mountains, with temperatures ranging around -5 degrees Celsius in the winter months. Once this preliminary job of securing the site is taken care of, the actual work for Shiawase Envirotech begins, and the runners will need to spend at least ninety days acting as site security while the Shiawase work crew cleans up the site.

Mr. Johnson offers a base pay of 4,000 nuyen per week per runner. At a minimum of fourteen weeks, this translates into at least 56,000 nuyen per runner. Of course, the runners will likely attempt to negotiate for more. On a Negotiation + Charisma [Social] Opposed Test, the face for the team may encourage the Johnson to increase this pay by 1,000 nuyen per net hit, up to the maximum value of 10,000 nuyen per runner per week. As the advertisement on ShadowSea suggests, there will also be hazard pay. Mr. Johnson will offer a one-time payment of 35,000 nuyen in addition to the runners' regular pay. A player character may negotiate this price up as well, raising it by 1,000 nuyen per net hit, up to a maximum of 45,000 nuyen for each runner.

Mr. Johnson informs the runners that acquiring the gear necessary for this run, as well as getting into the nation and resupplying during the course of this job, will be up to them. Most riggers, unless they are a part of the team, will not run in Tsimshian under any circumstances. The best shot at hiring a rigger to resupply the team while they are out in the wilderness is to hire one from inside Tsimshian, likely from Quesnel (the closest Tsimshian town). The runners will find that local riggers are highly resistant to the idea of working for outsiders, particularly if they are Anglos. If someone other than a Native American runner tries to hire a local rigger to resupply them, they will double their usual rate (4,000 nuyen per trip instead of 2,000 nuyen). For ease of recordkeeping, the runners should be resupplied once per week. To calculate how much each resupply package should cost the runners, use the following formula: 4,000 nuyen base cost + 1,000 nuyen per runner. So if a team has three runners on it, the cost for each resupply package is 7,000 nuyen. This does not include the cost of the rigger transporting the supplies to the team. So

in the example given, the runners would be responsible for paying out between 9,000 nuyen and 11,000 nuyen per trip, based on how successful the party was in hiring the rigger to resupply them. Assume these resupply packages will be sufficient to provide the runners with enough ammo, water, food, and other supplies to last one week. One way to challenge the player characters during this adventure could be to delay the arrival of one or more shipments (perhaps poor weather or flooding caused problems), or have a shipment not arrive at all (the rigger may have been ambushed by local gangs and had his cargo stolen, or he may have been killed). If the runners have trouble hiring a rigger in Quesnel, the next best option would be to try to find one in the Tsimshian city of Prince George.

The two types of characters that will have the most difficulty working in this area are shamans and dual-natured beings. Exposure to this toxic environment for prolonged periods of time could drive shaman characters down the toxic path, and could drive dual-natured characters insane. Each week that the character is in this environment, they need to make a Charisma + Willpower (3) Test to resist its corrupting influence. Any failure on this test should be noted. If a shaman character fails more tests than their Willpower rating, they will be changed permanently into a toxic shaman and will become an NPC. Dual-natured characters will be driven insane once they exceed this threshold. Glitches on the resistance test inflict a -1 dice pool modifier to future tests. These dice pool modifiers are cumulative. Critical glitches add a -2 dice pool modifier. To reset the total number of failures, as well as the penalties from glitches, the character needs to be completely removed from toxic areas for a period of two months. After the first month in a toxic area, the threshold for this test goes up to (4), and for the third month, the threshold for resisting the toxic environment goes up to (5). Characters that start suffering these failed tests may start manifesting negative aspects in their personality, ranging from irritability, uncontrollable aggression, even to the point of feeling acclimated to the toxic background count. The gamemaster may decide to reduce the background penalty for the affected character as if they had the Home Ground quality (p. 74, *SR5*).

PLOT POINT 2

ON THE GROUND PRIOR TO THE WORK CREW'S ARRIVAL

Once the team has made arrangements to get into Tsimshian and has set up the weekly supply drops, they will need to spend the next seven days clearing major threats out of the area. The contaminated area is a toxic waste dump, filled with over five thousand containers of waste illegally dumped at the site, allegedly by MCT. However, due to the fact that none of the containers have MCT logos on them (because MCT is not cartoon-

ishly incompetent), along with the lack of records tying MCT to the containers, the megacorporation has gone unpunished for the illegal dumping ground, which has created a Rating 6 background count in the area (apply a -6 dice pool modifier to any magic tests not aligned with the toxic domain). The major threats the player characters will encounter in this part of the job are toxic shamans and free toxic spirits.

The characters should encounter at least two toxic shamans that have to be cleared out of the area. Two examples of toxic shamans, the brute force toxic shaman and the strong-willed toxic shaman, are given in the *Character Trove* section of this book. However, if the gamemaster wishes to make this part of the adventure more challenging, they may choose to have the team encounter more shamans that pose a threat to their employer's interests. This site could serve as a major power site for toxic shamans, one that could be in contention between different shamans, as well as a site that draws in toxic shamans from other nearby areas. If there is one thing that Tsimshian is not short of, it is toxic shamans.

Other major threats the characters may encounter in this part of the adventure are free toxic spirits. Spirits do not necessarily have to be summoned by a metahuman magic-user to exist in the astral. Many areas have free-roaming spirits. In Tsimshian, many native free spirits have been twisted by the environmental destruction and have become toxic, gorging themselves on the power they get from the toxic climate. An example of a free toxic spirit that has spent many years dwelling in toxic domains in Tsimshian is provided on p. 32. Feel free to throw as many of these free toxic spirits at the player characters as is appropriate for their type of group. Base stats for toxic spirits are given on p. 87, *Street Grimoire.* The free spirits may also persist into the next part of this adventure. These free spirits are actively working to spread the contamination and are the primary reason why chemicals are leaking from their containers and making their way into the Fraser River and the Salish-Shidhe Council.

For characters who rely on Matrix access, there isn't any. The only way to connect to the Matrix in this dead zone is by satellite uplink.

PLOT POINT 3

ON THE GROUND AFTER THE WORK CREW ARRIVES

Once the runners have made the work site safer for Shiawase Envirotech personnel, the first work crews arrive. They start by setting up a perimeter fence and bringing in heavy equipment, personnel, and drones to clean up the toxic waste dump. The camp includes seventy-five metahuman workers, three supervisors, twelve vehicles modified to transport toxic chemicals, and twenty-five drones of various sizes and configurations. While the camp is being set up, the Tsimshian Protectorate assigns ten police officers to help maintain the peace. Another camp is being built not far off by protesters not happy to see outsiders associated with a megacorporation once again being brought in to tamper with their nation. These protesters are very vocal about their displeasure over the Council of Chiefs' decision to use these outsiders in an effort to fix their nation. They do not trust their motives and are fanatical in their convictions to drive the outsiders away, using tactics including sabotage, intimidation, and violence. This opposition camp will swell to about two hundred protesters. To complicate matters, the Tsimshian police instruct the player characters that only non-lethal violence may be used to defend the camp from the protesters and any other citizens they encounter. If the player characters violate this directive, they will be arrested and charged with crimes ranging from assault to homicide. The Tsimshian police will make it clear that protesters who break the perimeter and interfere with the work crew will be arrested and charged with trespassing but will not otherwise be harmed.

The gamemaster should make it apparent that the majority of the Tsimshian police are not on the runners' side, possessing sympathies for the protesters and their cause. This will manifest in actions such as tampering with the perimeter fence to allow protesters into the camp to disrupt activities and sabotage equipment and drones. This could also entail sabotaging any surveillance equipment set up to monitor the protesters. AAny calls for backup made to the Tsimshian police will be answered slowly, if not ignored altogether. If the runners do in fact catch protesters violating the camp, the police will send them off to be booked. However, because the charges are so minor, those same protesters will be back, sometimes that same day. And sometimes, the

police won't even go through the effort of driving the protesters all the way to Quesnel for booking; they'll just drop them off somewhere along the way, allowing them to come back and resume protesting in only a few hours' time. The police presence at the camp should feel like a farce for the runners (because it will be) and should add extra complications to their jobs.

Protesters are not the only interests out there that do not wish to see this cleanup project succeed. A member of the Tsimshian Council of Chiefs, Tamara Amherst, wishes to secretly sabotage the cleanup efforts. For this cause, she hires a shadowrunner team to do more damage to the camp than anything a rag-tag group of protesters could accomplish. While the protesters are usually armed with nothing more than shotguns, heavy pistols, knives, bats, and other assorted clubs, this runner team will use gear and augmentations equivalent to those of the player characters. The opposing runner team will be composed of native shadowrunners that come from Tsimshian, so the Tsimshian Police edict of only using non-lethal force still applies to this encounter. Unfortunately, the Tsimshian shadowrunners did not get the same memo about such considerations for the player characters. If the player characters succeed in taking down the opposing runner team and successfully interrogate them, they will learn that Council Chief Tamara Amherst was the one who sent them to disrupt activities at the work site. Amherst is not known to be Awakened, and has, in the past, attacked her opposition running for her seat on the council based on the fact that he was an adept, but the information the shadowrunners should provide should hint at the fact that Amherst could in fact be a closet spellcaster. They should also have information suggesting that she may have connections to the Long House Brotherhood, a secret magical fraternity commonly believed to be run by toxic shamans. The player characters should be left with the impression that if Amherst is not a toxic shaman, she at the very least is being influenced by them.

Metahumans are not the only threat to the camp in this section. This site will also plagued by attacks from toxic and mutated critters. In this part of Tsimshian, mutated caribou, mutated moose, toxic griffins, and toxic harpies have hunting grounds that will pose a problem for the shadowrunners. Stats for these critters are given at the end of this chapter.

PLOT POINT 4

SINS OF THE PAST

At the very end of the job, when Shiawase Envirotech has succeeded in cleaning up the toxic waste dump but before the runners depart Tsimshian, information from a protestor will be shared with a supervisor of the cleanup crew. According the intelligence from the protestor, MCT is still operating on Tsimshian lands, in a secret laboratory approximately seventy-five kilometers away from the cleanup site. This information is being shared with Shiawase to try to get the megacorp to do something about the MCT laboratory. Complaints have been filed by the locals to the Council of Chiefs for years, complaining that MCT is still operating illegally on their lands. They have sent the Tsimshian police to investigate, but because police officers are paid so poorly by the government, MCT has been able to bribe the investigators into reporting that no such laboratory exists at that location. The Shiawase Envirotech supervisor passes this intelligence up the corporate chain, and the next Mr. Johnson who contacts the runners before they depart Tsimshian is not from Shiawase Envirotech, but rather from Shiawase Headquarters. This Mr. Johnson wants the runners to look into this laboratory. If the runners find that MCT is running an off-the-books lab inside Tsimshian, they are asked to eliminate all those who work in that laboratory and steal the research that they are working on. Because this is another job, another Negotiation + Charisma Test will be required. Mr. Johnson will initially offer each runner 25,000 nuyen to do this job, and this may be negotiated up all the way to 35,000 nuyen. Unlike Shiawase Envirotech, Mr. Johnson from the parent corporation is willing to provide additional weapons and supplies to get this job done. Shiawase is not overly concerned with the runners being caught attacking MCT in this facility. Given that it is operating illegally on Tsimshian land, MCT will not be able to claim its existence publicly, not without angering the Tsimshian nation and risking a diplomatic grievance with the Corporate Court. That also means they cannot claim extraterritorial status for the secret laboratory. This is a situation Shiawase believes it can exploit to its advantage.

If the runners accept this new job, they will need to make a Perception + Intuition (4) Test to find the entrance to the underground facility. Snow cover in this area will hinder this effort. The player characters will eventually find a locked hatch leading into the ground. Dropping down into the underground facility, the runners will discover a still-active scientific laboratory. Fortunately for the player characters, the facility is small. It only contains twenty-five permanent research personnel and twenty-four security personnel. The security personnel are broken into three different shifts, so only eight guards are on duty at any given time. Once the runners clear the facility and hack into the data files, they will find that this laboratory has been operating for a long time, even before MCT was forced to officially leave the country. Their primary mission has been to study newly emerging diseases; diseases mutated by Tsimshian's severely damaged eco-system. MCT has been looking to find new diseases that they can weaponize and turn into new biological weapons. A secondary objective has been to capture, dissect, and study the brains of toxic shamans, looking to better understand the pathology of follow-

ing the toxic path and determine whether such research could be used to foster the treatment of these magic-users. Their hoped-for goals include generating more profits for MCT and perhaps giving them a new source from which to recruit magic-users. Another objective of the secret laboratory has been to understand why Tsimshian has been seeing a decline in the appearance of technomancers within its population. The native technomancer population seems to have suffered a twenty-five percent drop over the last ten years, and MCT was looking for ways to explain this decline. In addition, Native technomancers have shown more difficulty interacting with the Matrix than technomancers from other parts of North America, and MCT has been very interested in understanding those differences.

After the runners complete this job, they will be paid for their services and allowed to leave the nation. Shiawase will have gained a tremendous amount of research paydata, Shiawase would have proven themselves and their intentions to Tsimshian, garnered some positive public relations and have perhaps opened up future business opportunities with the Native American nation.

CHARACTERS & CRITTERS

FREE TOXIC SLUDGE SPIRIT

(RATING 7)

This free toxic sludge spirit has spent the last decade or so growing stronger off of the toxic environment found in Tsimshian. It has used Karma to raise its attributes, initiate, and acquire more spirit powers. This spirit is still a Force 7 sludge spirit for the purpose of determining its Immunity to Normal Weapons.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
13	10	12	7	7	10	10	7	4	7	11

Initiative	22 + 2D6
Astral Initiative	20 + 3D6
Condition Monitor	15 / 12
Limits	Physical 13, Mental 13, Social 10
Armor	14 (against normal weapons)
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Counterspelling, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Perception, Sneaking, Spellcasting, Unarmed Combat
Qualities	Magician
Initiate Grade	4
Metamagics	Centering, Masking, Quickening, Shielding
Spells	Acid Stream, Fireball, Flamethrower, Mass Agony, Physical Camouflage, Sludge (Gun), Toxic Wave
Critter Powers	Accident, Astral Form, Banishing Resistance, Binding, Elemental Attack (Pollutant), Engulf (Water), Fear, Materialization, Movement, Mutagen, Sapience, Search, Spirit Pact, Regeneration
Weaknesses	Allergy (clean water, Severe)
Notes	Magic-based limits are increased by the rating of the background count.

MUTATED CARIBOU

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
9	5	4	8	3	2	2	1	5

Initiative	6 + 3D6
Condition Monitor	13 / 10
Armor	2
Limits	Physical 10, Mental 3, Social 3
Skills	Perception 4, Running 5, Unarmed Combat 4
Critter Powers	Natural Weapon (Antlers, DV 9P, Reach 1, AP –1)

MUTATED MOOSE

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
13	5	4	9	3	2	2	1	5

Initiative	7 + 2D6
Condition Monitor	15 / 10
Armor	2
Limits	Physical 12, Mental 4, Social 3
Skills	Perception 4, Running 6, Unarmed Combat 4
Critter Powers	Natural Weapon (Horns, DV 10P, AP –1)

TOXIC GRIFFIN

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M
9	7	5	9	4	3	5	1	6	5

Initiative	10 + 2D6
Condition Monitor	13 / 10
Armor	3
Limits	Physical 11, Mental 5, Social 4
Skills	Flight 4, Perception 6, Unarmed Combat 6
Critter Powers	Enhanced Senses (Vision Magnification), Natural Weapon (Claws/Beak: DV 10P, AP –1), Pestilence, Venom

TOXIC HARPY

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M
3	5	4	3	2	2	3	1	6	4

Initiative	7 + 1D6
Condition Monitor	10 / 9
Armor	2
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 3, Social 4
Skills	Flight 4, Perception 4, Unarmed Combat 5
Critter Powers	Immunity (Pathogens), Natural Weapon (Claws, DV 4P, AP —), Pestilence

MCT SECURITY GUARD (HUMAN)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
4 (+2)	5 (7)	4 (7)	5 (7)	3	3	3	3	6

Initiative	10 + 1D6
Condition Monitor	10 / 10
Armor	18
Limits	Physical 7, Mental 4, Social 4
Skills	Athletics skill group 6, Automatics (SMG) 7 (+2), Clubs 5, Longarms 4, Outdoors skill group 4, Perception 6, Pistols 4, Sneaking (Wilderness) 7 (+2)
Augmentations	Bone Lacing (Aluminum), Cyberears Rating 2 (Audio Enhancement 3, Damper) Cybereyes Rating 4 (flare compensation, low-light, ocular drone, smartlink, thermographic vision), Muscle Replacement 2, Reaction Enhancers 3
Weapons	Colt Cobra TZ-120 [SMG, Acc 4(5), DV 8P, SA/BF/FA, AP –1, RC 2(3), w/Ex-explosive ammo, w/ folding stop, top-mounted laser sight, and barrel mounted gas-vent 2 system] Stun baton [Club, Acc 4, Reach 2, DV 9S(e), AP –5] Ultimax 70 [Machine Pistol, Acc 5(6), DV 8P, BF/FA, AP –1, 15(c) w/ Ex-explosive ammo, w/ gas vent 2, laser sight]

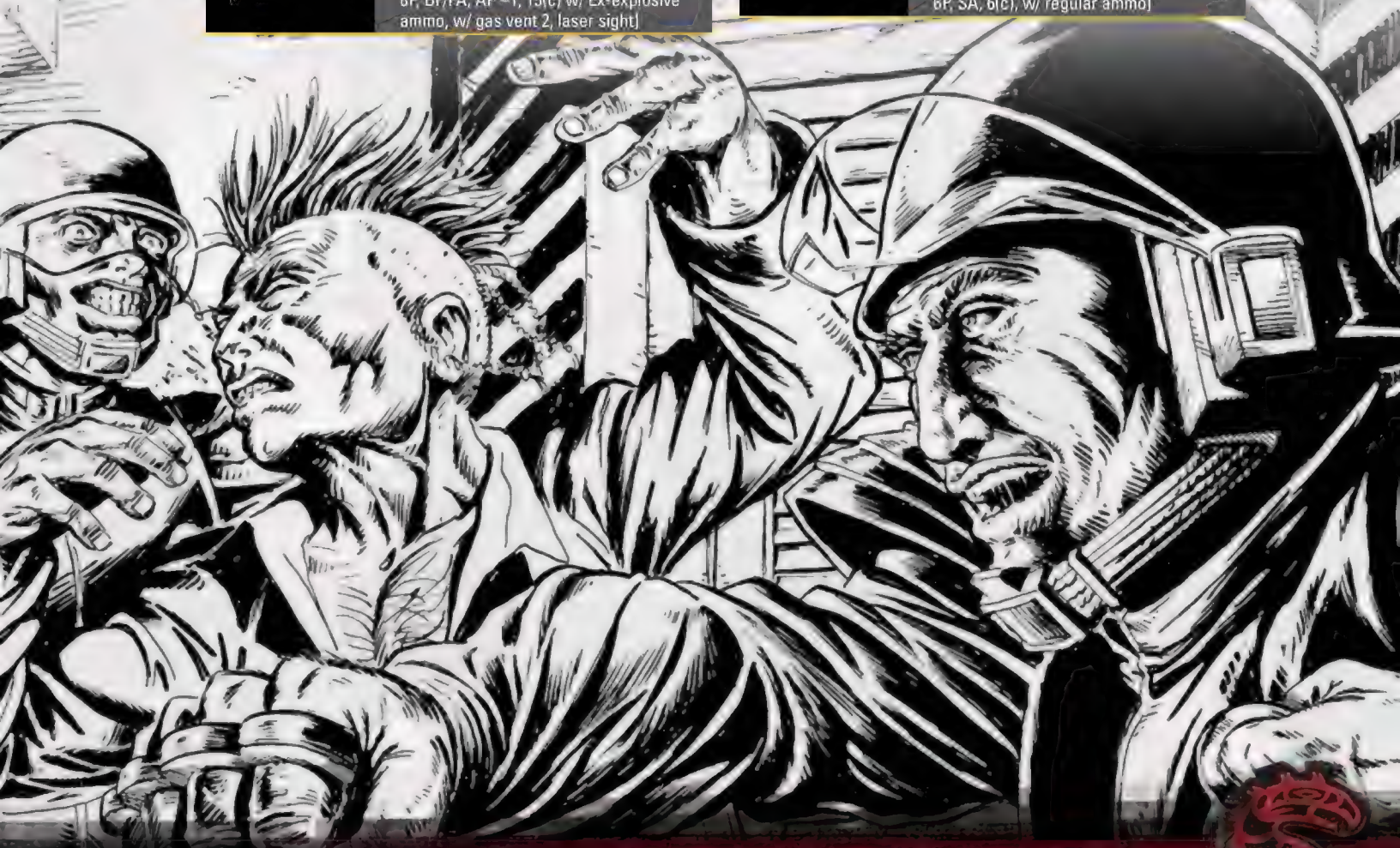
TSIMSHIAN PROTESTERS/ ACTIVISTS

(HUMAN, PROFESSIONAL RATING 2)

The protesters for *Running in a Toxic Wasteland* may not be so dangerous on their own based on the weapons they carry and how inexperienced they are with them, but in larger groups they can prove to be a challenge for even veteran runners. Depending on the composure of the group of player characters, it would be best to use protesters in medium to large groups, anywhere between ten and twenty protesters.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
3	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	6

Initiative	6 + 1D6
Condition Monitor	10 / 10
Armor	9
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 6
Skills	Blades 4, Clubs 3, Computer 3, Longarms 4, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols 4
Gear	Armored Vest (9), commlink
Weapons	Bat [Club, Acc 4, Reach 1, DV 6P] Defiance T-250 [Shotgun, Acc 4, DV 10P, SS/SA, AP –1, 5(m), w/ regular ammo] Streetline Special [Hold Out Pistol, Acc 4, DV 6P, SA, 6(c), w/ regular ammo]



SOUTHERN INSURRECTION

Zona Norte
01/13/2077
2341 hours

"Moving into position now. Stand by."

From the safety of the armored mobile command vehicle a half-kilometer away, Detective Miguel Sanchez of the recently formed Bogotá Police Force watched through the AR feed as the drone crept through the skeletal frame of the half-completed office building. As it got close, the EOD drone extended two thin arms toward the mysterious package located in what would eventually be an open courtyard of the rectangle-shaped complex.

Detective Sanchez took another sip of his soycaf and looked at the drone rigger stationed a few seats over. This was the sixth scene he'd dealt with in forty-eight hours, and he was exhausted. "Beginning initial sensor sweep," she announced, her electronically modulated voice coming from the command vehicle's internal speakers. Other technicians at various workstations monitored data from the drone's sensor feeds, trying to determine exactly what type of device they were dealing with. If powerful enough, the device could easily destroy the unfinished structure and severely damage the surrounding area.

"Chem-sniffer detecting some unusual compounds, running a cross-reference now," one tech said.

"No signals transmitting or receiving from the device. No Matrix device or ID marker detected. It's completely dark," said another.

"Scans detect a small power source, but it's no more than a cheap commlink," a third reported.

Standing next to Sanchez, the EOD team leader rubbed a meaty palm over his bald head. "Okay then, let's continue."

Then, without warning, a large rocket fired up and out of the package. Everyone braced, expecting a massive explosion, but it continued its ascent for a kilometer. Then a blinding flash of light accompanied several staccato booms overhead as a bright star-shaped display illuminated the area. Sanchez started to issue orders when several more loud explosions ripped through the night. Within sixty seconds, every construction vehicle or piece of heavy equipment in the construction yard was destroyed.

Quickly the officers sent reports, scrutinized visual feeds, and communicated with HQ. Five minutes later, Sanchez strode out of the vehicle, his fatigue burnt away by adrenaline and anger. AROs gave initial reports about simultaneous attacks all over the city. Sanchez pounded the command center's side; they'd been suckered by fixating on one target.

"Detective Sanchez?" came a voice to his left. Sanchez looked to see the comm tech holding a secure commlink out to him. "Priority message from HQ, eyes only," he said, handing the device over. Sanchez frowned as he pressed his thumb against the bio-reader. According to the message, while the attacks occurred, hackers data-bombed the local grid with a VR message. Sanchez watched as the message scrolled.

<ATTENTION, INVADERS OF BOGOTÁ!!! You think because you were victorious over Amazonian forces that you have claim to this city. You are wrong! This city was never a prize to be won by either side in that unwanted, unprovoked war. And because you defeated your enemy, you feel that you can claim us as spoils of that war? You think that you can use fabricated lies, engineered public opinion, corrupt government, and corporate influence to tell us that this is for the better? NO! WE WILL NOT STAND FOR THIS ANY LONGER!!! We will oppose you! We are ***BRIGHT STAR****, the symbol of hope that Bogotá will once again be a city FREE from any control. We will fight until every last invader and their agents are gone! There will be no negotiation, no compromise. These are our only terms; disregard them at your own peril. To those who recognize the enslavement and cultural genocide they offer disguised as "progress" and "reconstruction," join us and fight for what few in this world have: TRUE FREEDOM!>*

Sanchez dashed the 'link against the command center, sending pieces flying.

OVERVIEW

In the latter days of their war with Amazonia, Aztlan launched Operation: Huntress, their plan to take the city of Bogotá should they defeat the great dragon Sirrurg. Less than an hour after the great dragon fell, Aztlan forces swept into the city, and the Battle of Bogotá began. For almost a month, brutality reigned as both sides slugged it out. By the time it was over, a third of the city was destroyed. Aside from securing the city, Aztlan and Aztechnology used the battle as an opportunity to purge most of their enemies in the area. Entire neighborhoods were eradicated with extreme prejudice in that effort; combatant or civilian, it didn't matter.

Near the end of the battle, a loose coalition of mercs, shadowrunners, and civilians led by the mercenary outfit Black Star attempted a counterattack that ultimately failed. The battle finally ended when the Corporate Court sent in mercenary forces (most notably the Free Marine Corps) under the auspices of the UN to take control of the city. But it didn't really matter, as by then Aztlan had already won.

Despite their brutality during the war, Aztlan emerged as heroes, mostly for defeating the despised Sirrurg, a.k.a. "The Destroyer." As per the cease-fire agreement that officially ended the war, Aztlan officially annexed Bogotá. But while they basked in their triumph, no one realized just how tentative a hold they had on the city. Despite all appearances, the war was a pyrrhic victory. Most of their regular military forces were shattered, and the local economy was near collapse. The real victor in the war was Aztechnology, who wasted no time with massive re-construction and consolidation of power efforts.

Despite the PR, everyone in Bogotá knew what sins Aztlan/Aztechnology committed. In the following months, political dissidents, religious crusaders (looking to assist Bogotá's now-outlawed Catholic church), and anarchists were drawn to Bogotá. And with Aztechnology ramping up reconstruction efforts, many in Bogotá feared "Aztlanization" would be forced on them.

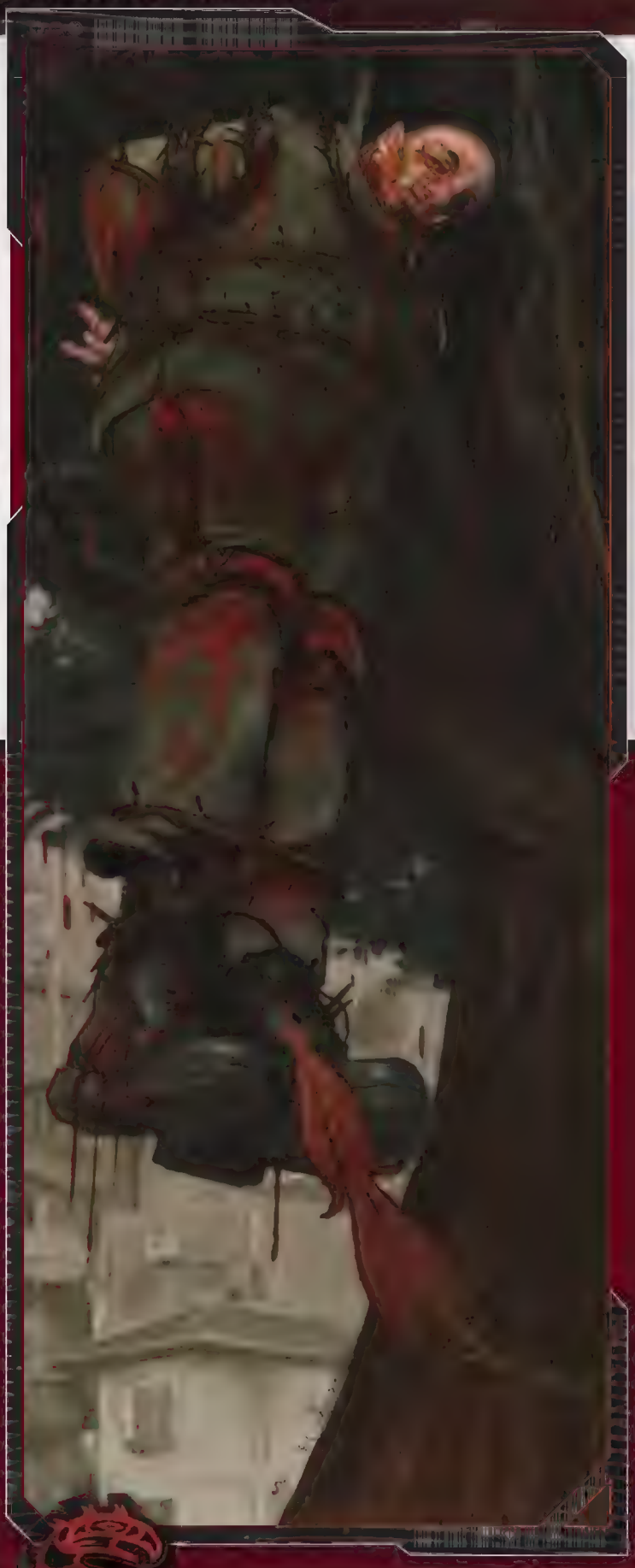
The insurgency began as soon as the cease-fire was signed, and their membership has been growing. Led by Aufheben, a former member of Black Star, several mercenaries and runners who survived Operation: Huntress formed cells and began prosecuting Aztechnology targets under the name of Bright Star. The first targets were purely infrastructure, but soon skirmishes erupted on the streets. To keep control of the situation (and keep Aztechnology in check), the UN extended the Free Marine Corps' contract in Bogotá as peacekeepers. Unable to deal with the situation directly, Aztechnology did what most megas do when there's dirty work to be done. They turned to the shadows. Their offer is simple: hunt down Bright Star, eradicate them from Bogotá, and get paid a lot of money.

PLOT POINT 1

Wherever the runners' currently are, they receive a call from a fixer about a Matrix meet for a possible long-term job in South America. The fixer won't have many details, except that it's a long-term contract rather than a single job, and heavy combat is possible.

The runners are provided a Matrix location and password for the meet. If the players aren't already a team, they'll have to attend separately. AR or VR, it doesn't matter, though they'll be at a distinct disadvantage if they only use AR.

The meet happens at a virtual café styled after a basic cantina. Any hackers will quickly realize that this place is a high-rated node with some very nasty IC and spiders on standby should anyone decide to get cute. Once everyone has arrived, Mr. Johnson (a.k.a. Julio Mendoza, a mid-level Aztechnology Johnson, if the players are inclined to look him up) quickly goes into his pitch. The job is described as a search-and-neutralize operation in Bogotá. Initially, the players will be offered a small base of operations, an operations allowance of 10,000 nuyen per month, and bounties ranging from 5,000 to 50,000 nuyen depending on the individual. Mr. Johnson won't discuss any additional details until the players agree to the job. If pushed, he'll toss in local logistical support (i.e. medical, material, weapons, and direct access to the local grid), then he'll dangle a possible 500,000 nuyen bonus (total) if certain targets can be captured or neutralized within a specific time frame (within one to five months).



If the players agree, he informs them of their target: the mercenary group Black Star. He tells them to be at Juan Azcapotzaclo International Airport in twenty-four hours. From there they'll be shuttled to their temporary HQ in Bogotá.

PLOT POINT 2

When the players eventually arrive in Bogotá, they see a warzone attempting to rebuild itself through the supposed generosity of Aztechnology. While some areas are better off than others, there is at least some damage everywhere. It's not uncommon to see makeshift stores and modular housing among the blasted remnants of buildings. Destroyed vehicles have mostly been removed, but the roads are still treacherous to most vehicles. Only those with the sturdiest suspensions or off-road capabilities dare traverse them. People still move about but keep a wary eye on anything that looks like Aztechnology or BPF. FMC vehicles and squads routinely patrol the area watching for any signs of trouble, but mostly they maintain a somewhat distant presence and intervene only when necessary. Compared to the BPF, the marines are practically welcomed by the locals.

BPF VERSUS FMC

What Aztlan didn't count on when they annexed Bogotá was a stipulation in the agreement that was insisted on by the UN (read: the Corporate Court). The Free Marine Corps would remain in the city as peacekeepers until an orderly transition of power was completed. Aztlan was fine with this and simply waited for the FMC's contract to expire. But then Bright Star happened, and the FMC's contract was extended. Now Aztechnology has to deal with a group of top-tier mercenaries that they can't control.

While Bogotá technically belongs to Aztlan, the FMC's contract/mandate grants them authority to take control of any "critical situation" to maintain the overall peace and protect the city and its citizens—even against Aztlan. Of course this caused a lot of friction between the Bogotá Police Force and the FMC. The BPF resents the FMC's authority, and the FMC recognizes the BPF for the puppet organization they truly are. Needless to say the two hate each other with a passion and undermine each other (subtly) whenever possible. Their power struggle is something of a stalemate, but Bright Star is an X-factor that could tip the scales. Currently the FMC considers Bright Star a criminal matter rather than a military one and has a hands-off policy unless massive fighting breaks out. This, of course, annoys Aztlan and the BPF to no end, but their protests to the UN/CC have fallen on deaf ears.

The players are taken to a small villa in Zona Norte by a male elf known only as Carlos, who is their local contact (read: control officer). He is friendly and accommodating, giving the players access to the local grid and helping them settle in. He also has several dossiers about suspected local insurgents, which includes one about a former mercenary named Aufheben. In fact, Aufheben is considered the highest priority target, with a 75K bounty on his head. If their employers also happen to learn of any actionable intelligence, Carlos will inform the players. Otherwise, the runners are free to design plans and carry them out as they see fit. If the players need any specialized gear or replacement ammo/ordnance, Carlos will assist (within reason, of course).

What the players don't know is that they aren't the only team Aztechnology has hired.

PLOT POINT 3

The dossiers provided by Carlos give the players several possible Black Star members, ranging from lowly street scum, to mid-level members, all the way to what Carlos calls the "holy trinity." At the top is a shadowrunner/merc known as Aufheben. According to the file, Aufheben was a member of Black Star, a mercenary group that caused particular trouble for Aztlan during the war. During Operation: Huntress, Aufheben personally led the failed counteroffensive against Aztlan troops. The bounty for his death is 50K; pay jumps to 75K if he is captured. The other two are Aufheben's lieutenants, a human doctor named Paul Stevens, a devout Catholic who lent his services during the war, and a female ork mercenary known simply as Nightshade (use Insurgent stats for Dr. Stevens with appropriate medical Active and Knowledge skills, and FMC stats for Nightshade). Both of them are worth 35K dead, 45K alive.

The players are free to pursue Bright Star however they choose. But during the course of their legwork, they find that Bogotá isn't as supportive of Bright Star as one might think. After four years of war and destruction, most citizens are shell-shocked and just want to be left alone to rebuild their lives. Under Aztlan or Amazonian control, or being "free"—it's all semantics to them now. They just want the fighting to stop, and many consider Bright Star unwelcome agitators who are just going to cause more needless death and destruction. This gives the players some room to work when going after the insurgents.

Finding lower-echelon members (or wannabes) of Bright Star is easy enough. There are plenty of coffeehouse revolutionaries in Bogotá. While they may (or may not) be actual members, they are useful enough to Bright Star to be used as contacts at best, decoys at worse. But every so often, someone makes the grade and actually knows the right people. Or the players can simply go off of Aztechnology intel to form a "hit list."

But no matter what they do, the players need to be careful about getting the FMC's attention. While not actively looking for Bright Star, they have no qualms about taking out anyone causing too much trouble.

PLOT SUGGESTION: INFILTRATE BRIGHT STAR

While not the only way to tackle this adventure scenario, one suggestion is for the players to infiltrate Bright Star as potential recruits. This could open up the possibility to identify other members, gain intelligence on the movement's activities and potential targets, and get close to Aufheben or his lieutenants. Should the players go this route, they'll start out as their own cell and be expected to prosecute Aztechnology targets. Dr. Stevens or Nightshade hands down their marching orders. The players' success determines how quickly they'll move up the ladder. As they progress, the targets become less about hurting Aztech's bottom line and more about outright murder and assassination against so-called "traitors and collaborators." Nightshade in particular becomes more bloodthirsty, either enacting or assigning missions that threaten to bring the FMC into the fight against them. This puts Aufheben in a bad position: How does he deal with the escalation among his people while keeping true to his cause? Will he have to sacrifice a few limbs to save the body?

PLOT POINT 4

At some point, maybe after a few months of work, the players receive actionable intelligence (either from their own investigations or through Carlos) that Dr. Stevens will be meeting with several cells in an apartment building on the north side of the Zona. This presents a great opportunity to rack up some serious bounties. The insurgents set up a decent perimeter, complete with hidden lookouts and a couple of surveillance drones, but it's nothing too high-tech. What they lack in sophisticated equipment, they make up for in an extensive tunnel system (wired to blow if necessary) below the apartment building.

Of course, when the players make their play, another runner team tries to hijack their bounty. As the players are hauling out whatever quarry they have, the rivals strike. They use long-range weaponry to incapacitate (Stick-n-Shock, injection darts, gel rounds, etc.) the runners first, only switching to lethal munitions if necessary. If the players are able to avoid the ambush, they turn their captives over to Carlos.

THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

During their time in Bogotá, the players will eventually hear about a local pirate Matrix-cast called The Light of Truth that's been growing in popularity. It exposes the atrocities that Aztlan and Aztechnology continue to inflict on the people of Bogotá. Available for download for only thirty seconds at seemingly random times to avoid the Grid Overwatch Division (hackers with appropriate Matrix searches or contacts can easily find the source for a download), the Matrix-cast is obvious anti-Aztlan propaganda, but the players will notice something disturbing.

One of the segments shows a series of brutal interrogation sessions employing both magical and physical torture. Often, the subjects die. The footage could be considered fake, but the players recognize some of the subjects as bounties they've collected, or they might recognize their faces from the various dossiers. Dr. Stevens is one of them.

The Light of Truth eventually starts showing up on various news outlets throughout the world. Aztlan obviously decries them as fakes, but other news outlets continue to run the various stories and give them credence.

PLOT POINT 5

This is the point where the drek hits the fan. Nightshade learns about the players' raid on the cell meeting (especially if Dr. Stevens was captured) and mounts a rescue operation without Aufheben's consent. She attacks a local BPF facility with rockets and mortars, causing massive collateral damage and killing dozens of civilians. This immediately gets the attention of the FMC, who respond and put the attackers down with swift efficiency. But several manage to escape.

In an unexpected move, Aztlan, Aztechnology, and the BPF officially ask the FMC for assistance, claiming that Bright Star is now a "clear and present danger" to the security of Bogotá. Worse, per the terms of their contract, they have no choice but to render aid. The FMC is now effectively Aztechnology's unwitting allies.

How the players went about fulfilling their contract dictates what happens next.

If the players went the undercover/infiltrate Bright Star route, they get an unexpected message from none other than Aufheben. He informs them of the situation (if they didn't already know) and tells them that Nightshade escaped but is injured and needs assistance. Aufheben says it will be a while before he can respond, so he asks the players to head to the north side of Zona Norte and secure Nightshade until he and his team arrives. He also informs them that with new developments, they all need to leave Bogotá and that transport has been arranged.

If the players tried another method, one of their local contacts informs them that someone matching Nightshade's description has been seen in an office complex in the north part of Zona Norte.

Either way, this is the players' opportunity to finally bag Aufheben.

Finding Nightshade is easy. She's taken up refuge on the third floor of the complex. The office structure is only half completed, with most of the floors wide open. A similar completed building sits across the way. Construction equipment, tools, and walls in various stages of completion turn the floor into a maze. Given the nature of her injuries, it's a miracle Nightshade made it this far. When the players arrive, Nightshade is sitting on an office chair in a corner office with a large open windows (no glass yet). She knows that she's almost dead from blood loss, and she tries to warn the players. She confesses that she was captured weeks ago and was turned by Aztechnology, who threatened blood magic against her. The attack on the BPF was staged to get the FMC on Aztechnology's side.

Approximately fifteen minutes later, Aufheben and his five-member team (use Veteran Mercenary, p. 160) arrive. This is the moment of truth for the players; Aufheben is within their grasp. If the players try to take Aufheben, a shot will ring out and turn Nightshade's head into a fine red mist. The lack of a suppressor is meant to get everyone's attention.

Then a commlink belonging to one of Aufheben's team goes off. The team member activates the external speaker to let the *real* Aufheben speak. The players' choices about going undercover or not will determine exactly what is said, but the main points will be:

1. Aufheben suspected something was wrong with Nightshade, but he wasn't sure. He needed the players to secure her and bird-dog any possible trap. He tells them: "Don't worry; we were in position to bail you out if things went sideways." But the confession was a bonus. And now he knows.
2. The fact they tried to capture his double is proof of the player's true intentions. This was also a final test to see if the players could be trusted (use this if the players were undercover.)
3. The players have a choice: let his team go peacefully or he starts shooting. And he's a *very* good shot. They may get some of his people, but some of them will die first.

If the players try to push a confrontation or ignore the warning shot, Aufheben's team offers no quarter and uses lethal force to defend themselves. They'll also do everything they can to not be taken alive. Aufheben is across the way in the other office building. By the time the players can get there, he'll already be gone.

AFTERMATH

After the showdown with Aufheben, the players get a message from Carlos. He informs them that the "backbone of Bright Star has been broken" and that their services are no longer required. The players are thanked for their "good work" (provided that word of their missing Aufheben doesn't get out) and paid whatever money they're owed. Carlos also says that there may be future opportunities for them if they like. On their way out, the players notice a nearby construction project collapsing ... and a Bright Star firework explode overhead.

AUFHEBEN'S FATE

While the intention of this adventure is for Aufheben to live, players are creative and resourceful, quite able to pull of things the gamemaster did not expect. This could result in bad things for Aufheben, and gamemasters should not feel like they have to exert the hand of God just to keep Aufheben alive. That is to say, if the players are intent on killing him and they win in a fair fight, he should die. This could cause issues in the future when they see Aufheben's name pop up in JackPoint posts, but they can consider the name to have taken up a Spartacus-like aura, and a new soldier has arisen to carry forward the mantle after the old one fell.

LOCATIONS

ZONA NORTE

This is where Bright Star is currently concentrating their efforts. Before the war, Zona Norte was a well-established upper-middle-class area with all the nice amenities that make life comfortable. That was until Operation: Huntress. With Aztlan forces closing in, opposition forces led by Black Star used Norte as their last battleground and launched a counter-offensive. The result was eighty percent of the Zona completely flattened. After the war, Aztechnology selected it as the focal point for their Bogotá plans. Several massive reconstruction projects began there with the hope that it would become a new Aztechnology business hub, since Zona Oeste was severely damaged.

While the rebuilding is underway, life in Zona Norte is rough. Gangs and various criminals have moved in, looking for new opportunities. The BPF does its best to keep this under control, but they're usually too busy accepting kickbacks. Only the presence of the FMC keeps it from becoming completely lawless.

PEOPLE

AUFHEBEN

HUMAN MALE

A veteran shadowrunner and mercenary, Aufheben's past is a complex mix of rumor, misdirection, and contradiction—which how he likes it. Rumors also tag him as a rebellious corp-brat, a disgruntled soldier, or a political dissident turned terrorist. The truth may be all or none of the above. What is known is that Aufheben is a militant idealist and a self-proclaimed professional freedom fighter. He's linked to the neo-anarchist move-

ment in Berlin and at some point received extensive combat training and instruction in both political science and military theory. He worked the shadows in Europe for many years until signing on with the politically active mercenary unit Black Star. Due to their excessive ruthlessness against Aztlan forces in the war, Black Star was specifically targeted during Operation: Huntress and were wiped out almost to the man.

Severely injured during the Battle of Bogotá, he was listed as KIA by Aztlan but in reality was hidden by local allies. During his slow convalescence, he linked up with other like-minded individuals. To preserve his cover of being dead and continue his recovery (good medical care is somewhat difficult to find in Bogotá), Aufheben is the de-facto general of Bright Star. Unable to fight from the front-lines, he now uses his political and military knowledge to formulate strategy and provide guidance for the fledgling movement ... in theory.

In combat and politics, Aufheben is like a sniper; instead of massive damage, he prefers precision strikes that cause fear and chaos among his enemies while he quietly slips away. Note that Aufheben is still recovering from serious injuries, so gamemasters can adjust his stats and gear as needed.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG
5	6	5 (7)	4	5	5	4	5	4.6	4

Initiative	11 + 3D6
Condition Monitor	11 / 11
Limits	Physical 6 (7), Mental 7, Social 7
Armor	17
Skills	Armorer 3, Athletics skill group 5, Automatics 7, Close Combat skill group 6, Demolitions 3, Escape Artist 3, Etiquette 5, First Aid 3, Gunnery 4, Heavy Weapons 3, Intimidation 3, Leadership 6, Longarms 8, Negotiation 5, Outdoors skill group 5, Perception 6, Pilot Aircraft 2, Pilot Ground Craft 4, Pilot Watercraft 2, Pistols 5, Stealth skill group 5, Throwing Weapons 4
Knowledge Skills	Civics 4, Local Politics (Europe 5, North America 3, South America 3), Military Tactics 5, Political Science 6, Small Unit Tactics 6
Languages	Aztlaner Spanish 3, Chinese 2, English 5, French 4, German N
Qualities	Agile Defender, Code of Honor (Freedom Fighter), Guts, Indomitable (social), Prejudice (Outspoken, Corporations and Governments), Will To Live
Augmentations	Damage Compensator 1, Datajack, Sleep Regulator, Synaptic Booster 2
Gear	Commlink (Device Rating 6), earbuds, hardened mil-spec armor (light) [15], helmet [+2], smartglasses [Rating 4 w/ camera, image link, low-light vision, thermographic vision, smartlink], quick-draw holster, sub-vocal microphone
Weapons	Ares Predator V [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(7) DV 8P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 15(c), w/ 3 spare clips regular ammo] Cavalier Arms Crockett EBR [Sniper Rifle, Acc 6(8), DV 12P, AP –7, SA/BF, RC 1, 20 (c), w/ 150 rounds APDS ammo, 3 spare clips]

BPF OFFICERS

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

Enacted as part of a PR initiative, Aztlan commissioned the Bogotá Police Force. While the BPF was supposed to draw from the local populace, it's nothing more than another Aztechnology security unit. Most of the BPF's officers are veterans from the war, a fact that hasn't gone unnoticed by the locals. They are competent and skilled individuals but tend to operate more like soldiers than peace officers.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG
4	4 (5)	4 (5)	4	4	3	3	3	3

Initiative	8 + 2D6
Condition Monitor	10 / 10
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 5, Social 6
Armor	15
Skills	Athletics skill group 4, Close Combat skill group 4, Firearms skill group 4, Outdoors skill group 4, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Stealth skill group 4
Augmentations	Muscle toner 1, synaptic booster 1
Gear	Commlink (Device Rating 4), earbuds, light security armor [15], metal restraints (2x), smartglasses [Rating 4, w/ camera, image link, low-light vision, thermographic vision, smartlink], quick-draw holster
Weapons	Ares Predator V [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(7) DV 8P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 15(c), w/ 3 spare clips regular ammo] Nissan Optimum II [Assault Rifle, Acc 5 (7), DV 9P, AP –2, SA/BF/FA, RC 1, 30 (c), w/ 150 rounds regular ammo, 3 spare clips] —Shotgun [Shotgun, Acc 4 (6), DV 10P, AP –1, SA, RC 1, 5 (m), w/ 10 rounds regular ammo] Stun baton [Club, Acc 4, Reach 1, DV 9S(e), AP –5]

BRIGHT STAR INSURGENT

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 2)

Not every member of Bright Star is a hardened combat veteran or warrior-type. Any insurgency (or in their view revolution) has a variety of members, from street scum all the way to learned professional-types. The combat-oriented members work hard to train the regulars in basic combat tactics, but the regular insurgent's value is their wide variety of professional and knowledge skills—and their desire to not live underneath the Aztlan boot.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG
2	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	1

Initiative	8 + 1D6
Condition Monitor	10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 4, Social 5
Armor	12
Skills	Firearms skill group 3, Perception 5, Unarmed Combat 3
Knowledge Skills	*Gamemaster's discretion*
Gear	Armor jacket [12], commlink (Device Rating 4),
Weapons	AK-97 [Assault Rifle, Acc 5 (7), DV 10P, AP –2, SA/BF/FA, RC —, 38 (belt), w/ foregrip, 250 rounds of regular ammo] Colt L36 [Light Pistol, Acc 7 DV 7P, AP —, SA, RC —, 11(c), w/ 3 spare clips regular ammo] HK-227 [SMG, Acc 4 (5), DV 7P, AP —, SA/BF/FA, RC –1, 28 (c), w/ laser sight, 84 regular rounds, 2x spare clips]

FREE MARINE CORPS TROOPER

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

Known for both their combat prowess and personal integrity, the FMC formed when the former United States split into the UCAS and CAS because scores of marines didn't relish the idea of fighting "brothers" in a possible future conflict. Instead they went mercenary. Over the decades they slowly built themselves into a formidable fighting force.

Their current peacekeeping contract is simple: prevent heavy fighting from breaking out again. While other units would use these orders as an excuse for excessive action, the FMC has shown considerable restraint and engages only when necessary with directed, precision strikes.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
4	4(6)	5(7)	3(5)	3	3	4	3	3.4

Initiative	9(11) + 1D6
Condition Monitor	10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 5
Armor	18
Skills	Clubs 4, Firearms skill group 7, Perception 6, Thrown Weapons 5, Unarmed Combat 5
Augmentations	Muscle replacement 2, Reaction enhancers 2
Gear	Commlink (Device Rating 4), earbuds, full body armor (w/ helmet), smartglasses [Rating 4, w/ camera, image link, low-light vision, thermographic vision, smartlink], sub-vocal microphone
Weapons	Ares Crusader [Machine Pistol, Acc 5(7) DV 7P, AP—, SA/BF, RC –2, 40(c), w/ 3 spare clips regular ammo] Flash bang grenade [Grenade, DV 10S, AP –4, Blast 10m] Fragmentation grenade [Grenade, DV 18P(f), AP +5, Blast –1/m] FN-HAR [Assault Rifle, Acc 5(7), DV 10P, AP –2, SA/BF/FA, RC –2, 35(c), w/ 3 spare clips regular ammo, smartgun system] Stun baton [Club, Acc 4, Reach –1, DV 9S(e), AP –5]

LIKE A TON OF BRICKS

Mikio grunted and twisted his graphite-colored blade hard enough to hear it snap. The blade pixelated and dissolved, leaving only the wrecked carcass of a London constable as evidence the attack program ever existed.

The hacker sighed, straightening to his full height. The sleaze routine that had him looking like Sherlock Holmes in this nightmare of a host ought to have fooled the IC, but instead he was ankle-deep in digital snow and security routines.

It was the dog that did him in. Better for the program to manifest as a cocker spaniel or a coonhound—something that fit the physics of the place. Iced-over cobblestone streets and shuttered storefronts were no place for that type of dog. He looked to the left and right of the narrow alley before finally spotting the brown and white Çatalburun dog pacing in front of a doorway further down the alley. At least the program worked. He trotted over to his search program to see what it had found. A sign above the door read 0896571-Cranston.

"Very good, Chiyoko," Mikio said.

His program chuffed gratefully, and he smiled at it in response. Good coding was visceral—thorough. Each possible social interaction needed to be accounted for. Good coding meant everything to the virtual experience. His time in the host told him the individuals responsible for 0896571 were good. Even before the Mangadyne executive rapped on his office door, Mikio knew he would pursue this case. He'd watched angry and powerless as his commlink morphed into a useless hunk of gray plastic and wondered whose code was to blame. He'd been tracking echoes of that code across the Matrix, following it like footprints in the still earth. Now the code and his payday were in reach.

The inside of 0896571 looked like a curio shop crammed tight with cubbies and cabinets and nooks. It felt like they all organized into some pattern, but one even his MIT&T training could not unravel. With security already on alert, he didn't have time to try to figure it out. He was so close!

Chiyoko was barking now and nudging him with her wet nose. Mikio ignored her, instead taking a moment to study the small space. He knew the host architecture was meant to throw him off. The shop was a faked datastore—a red herring designed to fool lesser hackers. Still, it wasn't the first time he'd seen this trick. He dug through the curios until he found a dusty mason jar, then smashed it to reveal the key inside. Mikio took the key and slotted it directly into the back wall of the shop. Nothing happened for a moment, and then the wall dissolved, leaving a dim tunnel lined with datastores. It was as he suspected. Those Resonance Junkies with all their talk of skills cultivated in the deep Matrix were just street-corner digital magicians after all. Now, where were they hiding?

The answer appeared in the form of access logs. *Seattle.* Of course they'd be there.

Mikio tried to mask his intrusion, tossing out cleaner programs to erase any evidence that he had been there and making sure to close the little drawers he had opened. Then he jogged out of the alleyway, his dog keeping pace at his side. It took milliseconds to reach a node where it was safe to execute a graceful log off.

In the flesh world, Mikio's trideo blared K-pop from a room away. He sat up too quickly, and a forgotten bag of chips tumbled from his wide chest. The ork's hand moved reflexively to the back of his head where it came to rest on a patch of plastic nestled just below a yellowed tusk.

He had something. No, he had *everything*: Location, back up files—all of it locked up in his cranial datastore. Mr. Johnson was going to have to pay him a bit more than the original figure. Mikio stood and pumped his fist into the air. He started to pace, considering how high he could raise his fee. Had he paid more attention, things might have ended differently. Mikio was so distracted that he didn't notice the receive icon flash to life on his cyberdeck. When he jacked back in to contact his Johnson, things went terribly wrong.

MISSING IN ACTION

POSTED BY: SLAMM-O!

Two weeks ago a friend contacted me with a wild story about a virus bricking Mangadyne commlinks. Before you all jump down my throat, I get it. The idea that monolithic corporations program in timed failures into their products is older than the Matrix. For the most part it isn't true, though. A product breaking down the day after the warranty ends is usually coincidence. When it comes to Mangadyne, however, there may be more there than myth.

When Mikio contacted me, he said that his own commlink bricked, and that it wasn't an accident. There was even a rumor that someone had died as a result of whatever caused the commlinks to go dead. My friend might be a white hat, but he slams the Matrix as good as any of us. So when he told me the bricked commlinks were the result of a native code, I knew I had a bonafide conspiracy on my hands. He couldn't pull anything off the commlink itself, but his research found that at least five hundred other Mangadyne commlinks bricked the same day as his. All of the bricked phones had received a beta software update a few weeks prior. Mikio thought the virus was uploaded through the update.

A few days later, an independent report surfaced about the unusual number of commlinks that bricked immediately after upgrading to the beta OS. The company swept it under the rug and provided free commlink upgrades to everyone affected. That day Mikio called me and said that Managdyne had hired him to find the hackers who made the virus. I can't tell for sure if Mangadyne is trying to throw suspicion off of itself or if the corporation was the victim of sabotage. Mikio still believes Mangadyne released the virus on its own, and once word spread about it, whoever they contracted to build it made themselves real scarce.

> It makes sense. The company would have to eliminate any proof they are connected to this or the results would be financially and professionally catastrophic. The Corporate Court tried a case like this eleven years ago. Raiden Motors was auto-programming maintenance sensors on their cars to inform the driver the car needed maintenance on a schedule that was half the time of the required maintenance period. The matter was eventually settled by fines, but it took customers a while to forget it, and even longer for Raiden Motors to regain consumer trust.
> Mr. Bonds
>
> Who is Raiden Motors?
> Baka Dabora
>
> Exactly.
> Mr. Bonds
>
> In this day and age it isn't easy for someone to disappear—especially hackers who have to access the Matrix in order to grind out a living. If these guys are this hard to find, they're either very good or they're getting help.
> Sticks

The motive is there. Mangadyne commlink sales have slipped over the last two release models. I'm not trying to be our new Conspi-I-See or anything, but the pieces fit. If you're using a Mangadyne commlink, you might want to consider switching before everything you have turns to brick.

> So, did your friend make any more progress finding out who was responsible for bricking the commlinks?
> Baka Dabora
>
> That's the part that has me rattled. Last time I met with Mikio he said he was close to finding out who wrote the code. That was seventy-two hours ago. There's been no trace of him on the net or in the meat world since then. I tried his friends, his doss, even scanned his bank account activity. He just fell out of the world.
> Slamm-O!
>
> So you're saying you believe a killswitch really exists?
> Kia
>
> All I'm saying is Mikio thought it did, and whatever he found got him disappeared.
> Slamm-O!

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The singularity is a myth. There remains a divide between the speed of technological advancements and the corporate need to produce and release new technology every year. The result is new models that are not significantly different than the previous ones. The simple fact of the matter is that the pace of technology allows for significant advancements every two years, while the need for financial growth and return demands a twelve-month release cycle for commlinks. Conventional wisdom says that the way companies get people to buy their tech is to offer new bells and whistles that compel them to buy new commlinks. On the other hand, companies work on a two-year contract schedule that takes advantage of the tech cycle but makes it hard for companies to sell new commlinks after the first year.

Earlier this year Mangadyne piloted a solution to their problem. They hired a team of hackers to create a code that would automatically cause the phone to shut down or brick after a specified time. Once the pilot was deemed successful, Mangadyne implemented that code into an entire series of phones. However, there is a flaw in the code. Five out of the sixteen hundred people in the test phase died during the killswitch activation. Mangadyne techs believe the error has to do with the specific programs the five were using with their commlink when the killswitch activated. It is a minor glitch, negligible in business terms, but it could expose the corporation to litigation and PR woes.

Mangadyne hired a top hacker named Mikio to track down the collective they hired to make the killswitch. He found them, but he disappeared before he could tell the corporation where the hackers were. The runners are brought in either by Mangadyne itself or its chief rival, Mapen Technologies, to finish Mikio's work and find the Resonance Junkies.

Meanwhile, the hackers themselves have gone to ground, fearing the corporation will kill them to keep the virus a secret. They are hiding somewhere in Seattle, where their relationship with the underworld figures including the Night Hunters gang gives them a place to hide and a ferocious fighting force to protect them if cornered. If the runners want to get to their targets, they are going to have to battle through the Seattle underworld.

PLOT POINT 1

CHOSE YOUR OWN JOHNSON

The adventure begins in one of Seattle's roughest burbs. The runners are called to meet Mr. Johnson at an out-of-the-way Korean noodle shop in Renton's industrial district. At the late hour, the only people frequenting the shop are locals who know better than to remember who they've seen. When the runners arrive, they are escorted to a small back room and a waiting Mr. Johnson.

Both Mapen and Mangadyne are searching for the Resonance Junkies. The parameters of success are very different depending on who is paying the tab. The runners should be hired by whichever entity is a better fit for the campaign and their skillset. Mapen is looking to interrogate and/or recruit the hackers in order to extract details about the virus. Once the killswitch goes live, Mapen plans to release information implicating Mangadyne. If the runners are hired by Mangadyne, this is a kill mission. The virus is already slated for mass release, and it is too late to recall it. Once the hackers are killed, Mangadyne can separate themselves from any responsibility for the virus.

Mr. Johnson explains that he wants the runners to follow up on two leads. Once the runners agree to terms on a fee, Mr. Johnson provides the runners with a 5,000-nuyen certified credstick as an operational budget. He shares his two leads, careful to express the time-sensitive nature of the data he is providing. The first lead comes from a Renton-based fixer who claims to have information on Mikio, the last runner sent to locate the Resonance Junkies. Mr. Johnson believes Mikio discovered the location of the Resonance Junkies before he disappeared. The fixer is willing to sell that data to the highest bidder as part of an auction scheduled to take place later that evening. The second lead is the location of a meet that is supposed to go down between the Resonance Junkies and a rival corporation the following day.

No matter which client the runners are working for, use the stats for **Mr. Johnson (Corporate)**, p. 157.

PLOT POINT 2

TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER

Late night in Renton you can find almost anything is available for the right price. Just a few blocks away from the noodle shop, in the shell of an old Boeing assembly plant, a weekly underground auction is unfolding where the runners can get their hands on guns, gadgets, girls and/or guys, and of course, information.

While seeming as unorganized as a swap meet, and at times even impromptu, the auction is actually a sophisticated black-market front. As they scan the crowd, the runners will notice several organized crime figures and even a few corporate types and their hired muscle mixed in. One group that stands out is a handful of corporate operators trying to blend in. The group is in fact a recovery team sent by the corporation that didn't hire the runners to perform this job. The rival corporation employs a six-man elite corporate security team (use **Elite Corporate Security**, p. 384, *SR5*) led by their Lieutenant, Cliff Raines (use **Elite Corporate Lieutenant**, p.

384, *SR5*). Their standing orders are to bid on and recover the item. If they cannot recover the item during the auction, they are authorized to use lethal force in order to retrieve it.

The way bidding works is the auctioneers shows the crowd an ordinary-looking item, such as a pair of sneakers or an outdated cyberdeck, claiming to be vintage. The contestants bid on this front item. Once they win and the funds are collected, the winners are escorted to a private area where they can exchange the front item for what they really came for. The runners have been told to bid on item 14, a ceramic cat. Bidding starts at 500 nuyen. The bid raises by 100 nuyen per call. After it gets to 1,500 nuyen, the runners and Lt. Raines will be the only bidders for this particular item.

Runners can make an Opposed Test using the Intimidation skill to force Raines to stop bidding. Raines will drop out of the bidding on his own after the price surpasses 4,500 nuyen. If he loses the bid, he will alert his team to detain the runners after they leave the auction site so he can get the information from them.

If the runners successfully purchase the ceramic cat, they are escorted back to the exchange area and met by a fixer named Del Ray who informs them that Mikio is dead and his body is being held in the Auburn city morgue until someone arrives to claim it.

PLOT POINT 3

WHO HACKS THE HACKER?

The Auburn city morgue rests in a warehouse district known for its nightlife. In fact, once a week the row of clubs a few blocks from the building hosts a Vampire's Ball complete with debutantes and deadbeats all dressed up to look the part of vampires, ghouls, and other creatures of the night. Unfortunately for the runners, Auburn's ghoul problem is very real. When the runners arrive at the morgue, a pair of workers is loading bodies into a van. As the runners draw closer they realize the pair are ghouls and the van belongs to Tamanous (use GMC Bulldog, p. 463, *SR5*). Unfor-

tunately, one of the bodies being loaded is the one the runners came to collect.

The Tamanous agents are not particularly attached to Mikio's body. They can be bribed or otherwise convinced to take another corpse instead. Once the runners have dealt with the threat, they notice that Mikio shows no outward signs of injury, indicating whatever killed him was internal. No autopsy was performed on the body. If the runners make a Perception + Intuition [Mental] (2) Test, they will notice that Mikio has an extra datajack—this one designed to access headware data. A tech-savvy runner can make a successful hacking test to breach the headware security and access the files. Once the runners get into Mikio's headware, they learn that he discovered that the Resonance Junkies do all of their work through a fixer named Cyrus Shale. The hackers never meet Shale in person. Instead the business is conducted through a dead drop. Before he died, Mikio was also able to uncover the location of the dead drop. Runners may use a Software + Logic [Mental] (2) Test to dig deeper to learn that whoever killed Mikio did so with a variant of the Killswitch program that functions similar to black IC. Once he reconnected to his cyberdeck the program activated, preventing him from logging off. There is enough trace evidence of the program here to sell as paydata.

PLOT POINT 4

THE OTHER WAY

An elite corporate strike team led by Cliff Raines is also looking for the hackers. Having learned that they are not the only ones looking, the team floated the rumor that the Resonance Junkies would be meeting with them in Merriman Park in Puyallup at 7 a.m. There is no meeting. Instead, Raines and his team hope the ruse will draw out the hackers and anyone else who might have information or a stake in finding them.

Merriman Park was erected twelve years after the Night of Rage as a monument to the metahumans who lost their lives during those riots. The locals saw the park as a political stunt and dusted it with graffiti. Eventually the city warmed to the idea of the park, and locals began using it enough during daylight hours to warrant a regular police presence. Gang violence, however, still remains an issue at night. The tree-lined park is the size of two football fields side by side. It is surrounded on three sides by five- to eleven-story apartment buildings, with the south side opening to a six-lane street. Raines has snipers secured in the east and west buildings with the remainder of his team in street clothes spread throughout the park. Following the experience at the auction, Raines will recognize the runners but will not move to subdue them until they try to leave or cause enough of a scene that it ruins Raines' operation.

Though the Resonance Junkies don't show up to the meet, the Night Hunters gang makes an appearance, looking for anyone who doesn't fit in. Night Hunters are a transhumanist gang out of Renton that struck up a symbiotic relationship with the Resonance Junkies, providing protection and manpower in exchange for cutting-edge technological knowhow and intelligence. Unfortunately for the runners, that means the Night Hunters are all enhanced in some way, making them tougher than the average ganger (use **Gang Lieutenant**, p. 382, *SR5*, for the basic gang members). They will be able to identify Raines from his snooping around but will not recognize the runners.

This scenario can help the runners uncover additional clues. Raines doesn't have any new information, but the presence of the Night Hunters indicates a connection between the gang and the Resonance Junkies. If the runners manage to capture a Night Hunter, the ganger claims to know nothing about where the hackers are. He may be interrogated further and forced to reveal a name: Cyrus Shale.

PLOT POINT 5

DEAD DROP

Many hackers do their physical business via a dead drop, and in this case the runners must either follow or interrogate the ganger who handles the dead drops. Turns out the hackers are looking for a dude who hacked them.

Shale is unimpressive; his only connection to these elite hackers is that he is cousins with one of them. Nevertheless, Shale's knowledge of pulp spy novels led him to create a rudimentary but effective dead drop between himself and the Resonance Junkies. Shale operates his business out of a small pawnshop. An elderly woman who bears a close resemblance to Shale runs the shop. The fixer starts his days in the shop but spends the rest of his time riding his motorcycle around Renton, seemingly visiting random locations.

If the runners observe him for two days, they can make a Perception + Intuition [Mental] (3) Test to unlock the pattern to his movements. Shale moves throughout Renton in what he hopes to be a random fashion. In fact, he merely uses different routes in order to visit the same four locations. Each day Shale visits the same three corners and leaves an AR tag linked to the stoplight. He either leaves a small X or an O. The code itself isn't very complicated. The fixer uses the three locations in Renton as three-point cipher to tell his contacts whether or not there is something for them at the pawnshop. XXX is a response code. If the client has contacted him, that code indicates there is no new information to share with the client. OXO means there is a delivery to pick up at the pawnshop. The third code that has meaning is the rarely used XOO, which means he needs to meet in person with the client. All other letter combinations are nonsense, but Shale will use other combinations from time

to time to throw off anyone who is trying to hack his cipher.

If the runners approach Shale as potential new customers, he claims to be satisfied with his limited clientele and shows no interest in taking on new clients or runners. The other option is to pull him off the street and interrogate him. If the runners observe him before they move in they'll notice that he is also being followed by members of the Night Hunters. If he is seen being grabbed, the Night Hunters will consider him compromised and cancel future dead drops. If the runners decide to interrogate Shale, it becomes immediately clear that he doesn't know where his cousin or any of the other hackers are. He only knows that the Night Hunters gang is the group picking up these dead drops. If pressed, Shale will share how his dead drop system works.

PLOT POINT 6

SHOWDOWN CENTRAL

The final confrontation in this adventure requires the players to breach a train yard patrolled by gangs and drones and monitored by a high-tech security system. The Resonance Junkies have backed themselves into a corner. They don't want to be caught by Mangadyne, so they've created a defensive gauntlet. Given the overwhelming odds, a straight-out assault seems out of the question, so the runners must decide if they want to use stealth or challenge the hackers head on.

Despite the For Sale sign staked in the ground next to the gate, the train yard looks very much lived in. The walled yard comprises two-dozen rail cars in various states of disrepair scattered across a series of auxiliary lines. The yard also encloses an engine house and a control tower. The engine house is where the bulk of the gangers congregate. Inside, a railcar has been converted to serve as a makeshift hospital where Night Hunters receive their cybernetic enhancements. The Resonance Junkies have taken over the control tower, using it both as living quarters and the workspace where they program and hack. The hackers built a mesh network on top of the existing Matrix connections that functions like a Rating 4 host. All of the cameras and a trio of GM-Nissan Dobermans are mounted with an AK-98

Resonance Junkies are composed of seven hackers led by a fledgling technomancer (see **Resonance Junkies**, at right). They are supported by a contingent of twenty enhanced Night Hunters whose first loyalty is to the Resonance Junkies who enhanced them. Once the Junkies' leader is held by gunpoint or otherwise incapacitated, the other seven hackers will surrender, causing the gangers to stand down.

The conditions for success here change based on who hired the runners. If the runners were hired by Mapen, Mr. Johnson will require at least one of the Resonance Junkies and a copy of the program to be delivered to him. In this case the Night Hunters will give chase, seeing that their tech suppliers are being taken away. If the runners are working for Mangadyne, proof of death will be enough to cause the gangers to stand down.

PLOT POINT 7

PAY DAY

The adventure ends several blocks from where it began. Mr. Johnson has set up in a small auto body shop. If Mapen funded the job, Mr. Johnson is standing by with a trio of armed corporate security officers and a van ready to escort the prisoner to a location where he can be properly questioned. The Mangadyne Mr. Johnson also has security, but they are there for his protection in case the runners display any post-run aggression. Both Johnsons are happy to finish their dealings with the shadowrunners if the job went well, offering the promised payments.

CAST OF SHADOWS

RESONANCE JUNKIES

While they started out as just another street gang, the Resonance Junkies have moved beyond that. They always had a core of hacking skill, but they were the type of kids who had no desire to put those skills to use in a corporate environment. They engaged in a lot of petty Matrix vandalism in their early years, but some of their stunts—like the one where they programmed all the officer personas on a Lone Star station host to have porcine noses—showed considerable hacking prowess. They got the attention of some fixers in the shadows, who directed work their way that required Marrix know-how without any corresponding meatworld strength. Or social skills, since interacting with other people is not exactly the Resonance Junkies' strength. They are boorish, loud, amoral, and arrogant, but letting their poor manners tempt you into making a rash move, especially in the Matrix, could be a fatal mistake. Use **Ganger Hacker**, p. 156, for gang member stats.

The leader of the Resonance Junkies is Stella K, a barrel-chested human with dyed-black hair plastered to her head. She Emerged as a technomancer three years ago and dove into her new abilities enthusiastically. She has not received a drop of formal training, so she acts out of pure intuition and experience. Her intuition tells her that Brute Force hacks are the way to go, and she delights in attacks that show off her bludgeoning Matrix strength. When the job needs to be subtle, she delegates it to her subordinates. Use **Ganger Technomancer**, p. 157, for her stats.

WHEELING & DEALING

I got two interesting tidbits, both involving one of my favorite guys, Richard Villiers, along with everyone's favorite corporate playboy, Johnny Spinrad. The first is a series of trace-blocked messages that could be a hoax or could be an interesting exchange between two of the most powerful corporate sharks in the world. I would lean toward hoax if I didn't also have the second item, a rather interesting sim-recording. If I recognize the coding on the feed, it comes from Johnny's own recording system. I couldn't tell where they were—the background is a bleak and nondescript industrial facility—but I heard some boat horns in the ambient noise, and there were some strong smells of petro products. Makes me think it wasn't Atlanta, so they had to have met somewhere else, too.
Icarus

To: Neo-Phoenix
From: Rad-Playboy
Subject: Greetings

Thank you for this private contact opportunity. Let me start with my condolences on your losses. I know you had many friends and family inside Boston when the quarantine went into effect. Words have little meaning, so I'll be putting not only my money where my mouth is soon, but also a chunk of our R&D resources toward finding a cure.

Now to business. I'd like to meet and bounce a few ideas off of you that might be of benefit to both our interests. I know you're a busy man, as am I, and I'd like to avoid any early speculation on our efforts, so if we could coordinate the meetings surreptitiously, it might be best.

To: Rad-Playboy
From: Neo-Phoenix
Subject: Re: Greetings

Thank you for your kind words.

I am not sure what your companies have to offer in the way of research support for the outbreak, but your efforts will be noted by the Corporate Court and appreciated. As for your money and our meeting, the two events need not be mutually exclusive. There is an affair being held in Manhattan to benefit Boston. I am sure it is too late to adjust the guest list, but I would think you're resourceful enough to find your way onto the guest list. Locate me at the gathering, and we'll talk.

To: Neo-Phoenix
From: Rad-Playboy
Subject: Re: Re: Greetings

That wasn't the best spot for a meeting. Far too many eyes and ears around. You do know what "surreptitiously" means, right? How about you set up a quiet time and place, I'll get myself there quietly.

To: Rad-Playboy
From: Neo-Phoenix
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Greetings

The moment we had was enough. Your presence demonstrated your true interest. I'll deliver a specific meeting spot to you in the next few days. Head south to Atlanta.

Begin Transcription Code:

"'Sup, Dick. God, I've always wanted to say that!"

"That joke's about as original as your latest haute courture line. Would you like to talk seriously, or do you have a lot of time to waste?"

"Ease up. You can act all high and mighty when you have a stable place in the megacorporate universe. Right now, you don't."

"Story of my life. My position is never stable."

"Touché. Three megas in the last twenty years—you have trouble holding down a job, don't you? Maybe you're not the right partner for me."

"Mm hmm. Let's look at your alternatives: a dragon, the bloodletters, the flailing Americorp, the child prodigy. Are those better fits? The Japanacorps and Wuxing have

not been enthusiastic about partnering with outsiders lately. Or ever. That limits your options to Buttercup or moi. Who do you think will work with you?"

"Direct and down to business. Love it. I'm surrounded by lackeys who talk in circles and use a hundred words to say next to nothing. So okay, you might be my most likely ally on the Big Ten. And it turns out, I may be your best friend in the world."

"I hope not. Don't think I'm that far down."

"Of course you're not. You're just getting ready for your next big re-invention, is all. And I'm here to see you through it."

"You're all heart. What sort of re-invention are you talking about?"

"You know what's going on. The virus is everywhere, and you not only lost a friend to it, but your whole base of operations is now a black hole. Someone's going to have to take the fall for this, and you're looking like a pretty good candidate."

"I don't believe you have any proof of my involvement, or the involvement of any part of my company, in what's happening."

"Of course I don't. But who the hell cares? Think you'd be the first time someone got railroaded on trumped-up charges during a world panic? People are going to find a scapegoat, and you're awfully ripe for setting up."

"You think people might do that?"

"I think people *are*. You've got people under you who can read the writing on the wall as well as I can, and they're going to try to get out ahead of it. Especially that dragon—don't they, you know, have a reputation for playing the long game and being ruthless about maneuvering others into tough positions when they need to?"

"..."

"Your lack of a denial speaks volumes. So are you going to wait for a bus to run over you—or are you going to drive it?"

"You want me to pin the virus on the dragon."

"And Malmstein. I hate that asshole."

"So Erika and Transys become lost to me. And in return?"

"You come in. With me. Bring RJR, bring whatever else you can, and operate them under the Spinrad umbrella. You get complete independence over what you bring in. The people you left behind take the fall, and once again you rise up to AAA status with a new corp. That happens to be mine."

"But will the Court go for it?"

"Sure. Unless they want me to air the megatons of dirty laundry I've collected in my time."

"Including mine?"

"Your dirty laundry? Dick, you've brought megas up and down over the past two decades. I've done the same with queens, corps, starlets, and snowboards. Nothing you haul over here in your bag of dirty clothes is going to come close to gaining the kind of airtime I do with half the dumb shit I pull. I can cover for you."

"Johnny, I think this conversation might be leading somewhere."

"Good. I'd hate to be wasting my precious time. I could be snowboarding right now."

"Aspen's nice."

"Thanks. Drop my assistant the codes. I'll borrow your place for a few days."

"Careful of the dragon."

"I always am."

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Spinrad Industries (SpIn) is looking to find a way to move up the megacorporate food chain. Johnny Spinrad is not the most patient of men, and he has very little problem making high-risk moves in order to get the rewards. In the shadows of the Sixth World, there are very few endeavors more risky than Johnny's latest. With events in Boston putting some cracks in the foundation of NeoNET, Spinrad is looking to make a big move on the megacorp, or more specifically, the owner of the megacorp's ticket to the Corporate Court and AAA status, Richard Villiers.

Villiers is no fool. He's by far one of the sharpest business minds of the twenty-first century, but he has won his big gambles too many times. His luck is bound to run out. Spinrad wants to make some face-to-face connections with Villiers in order to make a series of offers and pitches to his corporate rival. The runners are being hired for two (and a half) reasons. The first is to supply Spinrad with a security detail with no connection to his corporation and therefore less possibility of them informing people who may try to hinder his efforts internally. The second is part of the cover. Spinrad will be traveling under an alias as a mid-level exec at SpIn, therefore worthy of a small security detail that just might need to be off the books. The half reason is Spinrad's desire for word of his efforts to make it out into the shadows. He wants runners to know that SpIn and NeoNET, or at least Villiers' part of it, are talking about another merger or takeover that will shift power on the Corporate Court.

PLOT POINT 1

A FRESH FACE

The runners are hired for an extraction and datasteal. The target is Alex Guy, a marketing VP for Prima Facie, a boutique PR firm with a few high-profile clients. Mr. Johnson does the hiring virtually with an early afternoon meet at Dante's Inferno Seattle. He initially offers the runners 40,000 nuyen for the team, but any attempt at negotiating gets that bumped to 60,000 nuyen, regardless of hits (or lack thereof). Mr. Johnson is trying to play hapless, but he could easily out-negotiate the best face in the shadows. Alex Guy is not really a marketing VP for Prima Facie. In fact he is more of a VIP for Spinrad Industries (SpIn), and more precisely he is THE VIP, Johnny Spinrad. Guy/Spinrad is also Mr. Johnson. This whole operation is a setup to test the runners in several areas, while giving Spinrad some entertainment.

Mr. Johnson also wants Alex Guy's client files. As a small addendum, he places a few restrictions on the operation. The runners are not allowed to steal any additional paydata from Guy or the systems at Prima Facie, and they are expected to complete this operation using limited violence and absolutely no killing. He won't explain his requirements any further, only saying that he's paying the bills, so he calls the shots. He requests the grab take place before the next morning.

The offices of Prima Facie are nothing spectacular. They're located on a mid-level floor of a downtown high-rise. The building itself has average security, and the offices have only passive systems for the team to overcome. The host system of Prima Facie should be nothing for an experienced hacker, as it has no offensive IC. The big test is the chunk of paydata screaming to be snagged from the system. On Guy's system there is a file marked "Client Photos—not for public release." Any analysis of the file reveals that it is quite large and filled with tons of video clips, photos, sim recording, etc. Any runner with any media or pop-culture knowledge can guess that this ephemera is the kind of material Prima had to buy to keep their clients' images clean.

The office building has only four security guards (use Corporate Security, p. 382, *SR5*) for the entrance and common areas, with individual security forces hired for specific companies. This means the gamemaster can be as kind or rough as she wants with the other security forces in the building. There is a single security guard stationed at both the front and rear entrances, while the remaining two patrol the floors separately. The building's host (Rating 3; A 4, S 3, D 5, F 6) is a rather boring single office design and doesn't connect to any of the companies in the building. All it contains is a datafile on renting in the building and a Realtor Agent Program (Rating 3) to answer basic questions. The general security for the building is mostly wired, more due to the age of the building and lack of updating than any security precaution. There is a camera on every third floor of the stairwells and at each end of all the main halls, along with one in each elevator. These are wired to the terminal at the front desk, where the guard watches them on four screens that put up images from the cameras in rotation.

When they head inside the Prima Facie offices, the runners will find Alex Guy working alone in his office or in the restroom. The office staff departs promptly at 6:00 p.m. Guy stays late, not packing up to leave until 2:00 a.m. The office itself is slightly nicer than your average workspace and very well-decorated. It highlights the latest trends, especially the recent Modern-Amerind styles.

The host for Prima Facie (Rating 5; A 6, S 5, D 7, F 8) is completely different than the office. The host reflects the latest in Matrix sculpting trends, including the newest rage, retro 3D shapes, with the modern computing power applied for astonishingly tight graphics and hidden details. Alex Guy's office terminal is a sidestep from retro Matrix to urban jungle gym. Obviously Guy likes to defy the standard laws of physics in his personal termi-

nal, as parkour is the movement sculpting of the virtual space. The files in his space are doors that open to reveal their contents within, though most, including the bait for the runners, are aligned in an M.C. Escher-esque pattern requiring virtual rotations as the personas move from place to place.

The bait file is easily accessed and filled with media from celebrities engaged in a host of compromising activities, including intimate engagements with people other than their spouses, illicit pictures of minors, and other shots of illegal or immoral nature. These are all actually part of Spinrad's personal collection, gathered to keep them away from the public eye, or for Spinrad's private amusement, or both. The files include several sexual acts recorded via his own simrig. The net worth of the data to the sleazy screamsheet market is probably in the eight-figure range.

Once Guy is extracted and the runners contact Mr. Johnson, they get a reply message to take Guy to the airport. They are given a private hangar number and an access code for the corporate gate. The corporate gate is a three-layer deal, with guards from three different megacorps working on each separate layer. The area is extraterritorial, and the runners could find themselves in trouble if they have some serious enemies. If not, they should pass through with ease using the access codes. The gamemaster may play up the tension, but in the end the players can make it through and on to the next plot point (unless the gamemaster has special plans for them ...).

PLOT POINT 2

HERE'S JOHNNY

Johnny needs a team to cover his hoop while he makes a few stops around North Am. He'll make the offer when they drop him at his jet in the private hangar. He'll pay them for the first job and then offer a chance to make some more serious money. His payment offer varies greatly based on whether or not he thinks the runners were tempted by the big paydata score. If they actually stole a copy, he'll offer them a chance to get back on his good graces and pay them a pittance.

He wants them to act as his personal escort for a trip to Manhattan, where he has a plan to meet with another exec. He won't say who the meeting is with, but the runners may be able to pick up a few clues. The big offer for the team that does everything right is 50,000 nuyen per day for the team. For the team that seems to have been tempted by his private collection of stills and videos, he offers 25,000 nuyen per day. For the team that actually made a copy, he offers 10,000 nuyen a day and a chance to redeem themselves. The monetary amount won't be negotiable, but the runners can roll Negotiation to gain other benefits, such as cyberware deals or bargains on arcane goodies.

Being hired is not a difficult job; what makes this plot point more complicated is an S-K Prime Agent (use Swat Team Member, p. 159) who is more than just curious about what the runners are doing for Spinrad. The agent has infiltrated Spinrad's maintenance staff at the hangar. When he sees Spinrad come in disguised as Guy, he suspects there is something bigger going on. Though rash, the agent decides he needed to get on the plane. While trying to sneak aboard, though, he is spotted by the mechanic refueling the plane. He kills the mechanic, stuffs the body in the plane's cargo area, and sets the fuel truck to autodrive back to the fuel station, but he doesn't have time to clean up the blood.

During the flight, the pilot will get a call that the fuel driver has disappeared. This puts the runners on their first assignment: making sure the plane is safe. Johnny Spinrad is a man who does everything in a grandiose fashion, and that includes his personal jet.

The plane is a modified Airbus A1570 HSCT, a full-size passenger plane redesigned to be a flying party-pad or business office for the billionaire playboy. The passenger area of the plane is four meters wide and fifty-three meters long. The rear thirty-three meters are a single layer with four sleeping cabins, a lounge, two restrooms, and a large seating area. Below that area is the storage for luggage and supplies, along with the corpse of the mechanic. The front twenty meters is double layered. The lower layer has a bar and social lounge with a large private bedroom near the front. The upper floor

has a meeting room, an office, a small lounge, and a security room behind the cockpit.

The runners need to hunt for the S-K Agent, who is very good at keeping out of sight. He starts down in the luggage area but uses access hatches throughout the plane to move around. Most of the time he stays in the rear section of the plane, though he may move forward to hide up front if the runners flush him from the rear. If he is flushed forward he tries to gain access to the security room while steering clear of the cockpit. He will surrender before fighting and try to convince the runners or Spinrad that he's more valuable alive. If the runners force his hand or try to kill him he fights hard to take as many of them down with him as possible, including taking the plane down if he must.

PLOT POINT 3

FIRST, WE TAKE MANHATTAN

The first stop is Manhattan for a short meet. Spinrad is making his first connection with Villiers at a benefit for Boston. His plan is to land at the airport and take a VTOL to the Manhattan offices of Rocket Records, a SpIn subsidiary. From there he's planning to take a corporate limo to the benefit, which is being held at Belvedere Castle in Central Park, the headquarters of the Society of Hawks (see p. 75, *Street Grimoire*). The plan hits a few speed bumps along the way, and the runners will need to help overcome them so that Johnny can make an appearance at the benefit.

The first problem is a landing delay. There have been some missile attacks on planes landing at the airport, causing flights to be diverted or to maintain their holding pattern if they have sufficient fuel. Johnny can't abide the delay, so he suggests an alternate plan. As would be expected of a Spinrad jet, there are parachutes, wingsuits, and collapsible gliders on board. He wants the runners to jump out, locate, and take out the terrorists so he can land.

After the runners agree (they will, he's Johnny Spinrad), they should be able to make quick work of the investigation after they see a missile launch while they are descending. They can get a solid idea of where the shot came from and come at it from the ground, or they could go after them in true Spinrad style by trying to land at the site of the launch. The missile that the runners saw came from a rooftop near the edge of the Lower East Side of Manhattan, also known as the Pit. Landing should be done in that area anyway, as the security is quite lax. If the runners don't know much about Manhattan, Spinrad drops them that little tip moments before they jump, along with a warning that NYPD, Inc. and the Manhattan Development Consortium frown on unwanted guests.

The airport terrorists are actually a trio of shadowrunners creating a distraction for a run going down at the airport. They're running a tight operation, with all three planes —astral, Matrix, and physical—covered in order to keep themselves hidden. They are based in the top three floors of a rundown high-rise just off the East River. The middle floor is their main base of operations. The upper floor is a series of traps to prevent an assault from above, and the lower floor is similar to the upper, but there are three relatively safe paths.

The upper floor can only be accessed from the roof door. Internal access has been cut off by structural damage. Access to the central floor comes via a hole with a ladder between the floors in one of the bedrooms. Access between the middle and lower floor is via the stairwell or the elevator shaft, though the elevator shaft has dangerous debris above. Characters must make an Edge (1) Test or debris falls, doing 5S damage and forcing an Agility (1) Test to avoid falling ten floors (30 meters) into the elevator car. Another Edge (1) Test determines whether the elevator car then breaks free, while another Agility (2) Test allows a leap onto the exposed floor through the open elevator door. The elevator plummets another 65 meters, slamming into the basement floor. The stairwell has a lot of debris from the various collapsed sections, slowing movCement over the space to half normal pace. Any fast movement, or movement by characters with bone density augmentations or a combined Strength + Body above 11, on the stairwell requires an Edge (1) Test or the floor collapses, sending the character tumbling to the ground and ending in a prone position. A glitch means their foot is stuck in the hole. A critical glitch results in a stairwell collapse and falling damage, and the collapse destroys the stairwell.

The upper floor has several well-hidden traps. The stairwell door is rigged with an electrification trap using components of a shock arrow. It requires a Perception + Intuition [Mental] (6) Test to spot and a Demolitions + Agility [Mental] (4) Test to disarm. Failure or activation results in 10S(e) damage, with -6AP. A glitch doubles the AP, and a critical glitch doubles both AP and damage. After the first, all future traps require a Perception + Intuition [Mental] (4) Test to spot and Demolitions + Logic [Mental] (4) Test to disarm. Failure on these is a failure to disarm; a glitch sets it off, and a critical glitch sets it off and collapses the room. The remaining traps are all grenades. All of the listed damages take into account the location of the grenade and an increase in damage from the reflection off nearby walls. At the entrance to the upper floor is a frag grenade (26P(f), AP +5, blast -1/m) that will go off on the first person through; in an emergency firehose box five meters from the elevator shaft is a high explosive grenade (16P, -1AP, blast -2/m) that will affect all targets within a three-meter cone across the hallway when the lead target is detected at the edge of the cone; in the rubble at the corners of the room near the doorway to the room with the hole in the floor are two frag grenades (30P(f), AP +5) that are set off by someone entering the room with the hole.

If any of the traps on the upper floor are set off, the runner team heads out to the rooftop patio area on the lower floor under the cover of the mage's Invisibility spell (Force 4, 4 hits). The street samurai locks on and fires off one more guided missile while the decker scans the local grids for the runners. All three of the runners are logged onto the city's MDC grid, running in hidden mode, and slaved to the decker's cyberdeck. After the missile is fired, the trio uncovers and tosses over three rappelling ropes. If a fight has started, the street samurai covers the other two while they rappel down (3 Combat Turns). If he gets injured, he leaps from the ledge and relies on the mage to catch him with a Levitate spell. If it looks all clear, they all go down together.

Whether the team is dead or chased off, the threat is done. If the runners keep one alive to question, the runner admits the basics of the job they were hired for and asks the runners to spare their life out of professional courtesy, possibly offering up to 2,500 nuyen that they were paid in advance for the job.

The second problem is an issue of alias and overzealous employees. Johnny wants to stay under his Alex Guy disguise for as long as possible. His company has reported him missing, and a rather self-motivated office exec back at Prima Facie has managed to track Guy down in Manhattan and directs security to detain him. Security approaches the runners as they exit the elevator in the parking garage of Rocket Records. This is easily handled if the runners don't shoot first. If they do shoot first, Spinrad will be pissed and may cut their pay or send them packing. He wants professionals, not trigger-happy thugs.

Problem number three is a familiar problem for Johnny, but not for the runners, and he wants to see how they plan to handle it. Johnny mentions he is not on the guest list but still needs to get into the party, and he wants the runners to figure out how they'll get him in. He's watching to see how creative they are and how strongly they avoid killing when it isn't necessary. He also wants to see how big of a trail they would leave behind for others to follow. Once all is said and done, he'll simply tell them to pull up and he'll get in—he always does—but they don't need to know that.

At the party, the runners are left outside with the rest of the security grunts. Security inside is being provided by the Society of Hawks and consists completely of bound spirits, a grandiose show of their power. After the party, Johnny emerges with a small entourage of ladies who giggle and smile when they see any members of the team with a Charisma of 5 or higher.

As long as everything went well, Johnny offers the runners an extension to the contract for another city. He won't mention the city right away. The girls, if they are still around, giggle at that, and pretty much anything else he does. Johnny won't order the girls away, but if the runners do (in order to protect their contractor), he won't argue. He'll simply smile at the girls and laugh, saying "Bodyguards!" and shrugging his shoulders.

Johnny reveals the next city is Atlanta as soon as they get on the plane. If they managed to come up with some really creative plans for getting him into the party, he'll chat on the flight. He'll ask about dream cars, dream homes, dream guns, dream gear, etc. Make note of these as possible bonus pay items later on.

PLOT POINT 4

ATLANTA ON MY MIND

An easy flight to Atlanta ends with another private hangar and another waiting VTOL. The plan for Atlanta is another meeting, but the where and when are not yet determined. In the meantime, Johnny has arranged for rooms at the Ritz-Carlton downtown. He has rented all five of the secure penthouse rooms on the thirty-third floor. It's opulent and amazing, and luckily nothing crazy happens here to damage the room. Unless the runners throw a huge party.

Trouble comes two days later, when the meeting location and time are lined up. To promote security, these details aren't set until an hour before the meeting. The plan is another secret meeting, this one held inside a shipping container near an Atlanta train yard. Both parties are planning to drive their limos to opposite sides of a container pile and leave their security outside while they go in and talk. Neither side can see the other, and no one knows who is meeting inside.

The area around the container yard is currently being monitored by three separate Atlantean security teams (use Corporate Security, p. 382, *SR5*) and a duo of Mystic Crusaders (use Security Mage, p. 157). The Atlanteans have discovered the meeting through magic. An Atlantean diviner, deep in the trance of a foretelling ritual, foresaw a vague gathering of forces that could wrest control of the city from the arcane organization. These vague visions offered just enough information to put several small teams from the Atlantean Foundation in the vicinity of the meeting and on the lookout for anything out of the ordinary. Along with the regular Atlantean teams, the pair of Mystic Crusaders are there because the mystical society did not appreciate being left in the dark about their partner's visions.

The Atlantean teams here are just one part of a larger operation. They aren't exactly sure this is where the meeting will be, only that the meeting is at a place of transition and storage. Foretelling is vague. The limo will be an obvious sign, and they'll move in right away. The runners can spot the team on their side with a Perception + Intuition [Mental] (5) Test. The Atlantean team is one hundred meters down the road, so keep modifiers in mind.

After the arrival of both groups, two of the Atlantean teams close in. The third team splits and covers the two entrances, ready to follow anyone who might escape or intervene if the other teams fail. The pair of Mystic Crusaders will split, and each will try and determine who is meeting. Johnny will spot the Crusader if the runners don't and flash his best smile before ordering the runners to get her.

Gunfire and sounds of fighting will come from the other side of the meeting as well but will end shortly before or right with the runners' fight. After the fight, Johnny and the runners (coming soon from Rocket Records) can head back to the Ritz-Carlton. Johnny will thank the runners yet again and offer another night at the Ritz before another city-hop.

PLOT POINT 5

ST. LOUIS BLUES

The final stop on the Spinrad tour is St. Louis, border city extraordinaire. The plane lands on the UCAS side, and Johnny has the spot for the next meeting. He needs the runners to secure the meeting location, sending them ahead to scout it and tell him when it's clear so he can invite the other party. He doesn't want to lose his opportunity to show up his fellow corporate leader.

The meet location is an old, abandoned oil depot on the Mississippi. The location only has two troublesome issues: devil rats and Slicks, both vermin. Everyone knows devil rats (p. 404, *SR5*), and gamemasters can be as mean or as nice as they want with having these big bastards come popping out of the metalwork. The Slicks are a small but well-funded gang. They operate out of the oil depot and act as Coyotes between the UCAS and CAS sides of St. Louis. They've revived an old '50s (that's the 1950s) motif with slicked-back hair and leather jackets over black denim jeans. The gang has only fifteen members and is led by a beefy dwarf named Willie. They operate two boats and two submersibles that they use for their smuggling operations.

The runners have a few choices. They can kill the gang. This option wouldn't be too tough, but it would leave a lot of locals angry and create a violent turf war to gain this property and claim the Slicks' business interests. They can convince the gang to let them hold their meeting on their turf but to make themselves scarce while it happens. This can occur through great diplomacy, a good bribe (at least 15,000 nuyen), or information on who is meeting. There are too many to be intimidated on their own turf.

Once the area is clear and the runners call Spinrad, he requests they come pick him up right away. It's finally a good meet, and this time the runners get to see who Spinrad is meeting with and even hear a few pieces of the conversation as they discuss merging or corporate acquisition. To identify the other person, any runner can make a Memory (2) test.

After the meeting, Spinrad goes with the runners back to the airport. He asks what city they'd like to be delivered to, and he settles up the tab. Runners may get a bonus at this point (based on their earlier conversation), or the bonus could appear later if delivery can't be arranged during their flight.

AT THE SPEED OF BAD NEWS

POSTED BY: COSMO

Conventional wisdom in business and politics tells you to get out in front of potential bad news. Don't bury it, people tell you, because one way or another it's going to come out, and then the cover up will make you look bad. And not just to the public, but to the people who really matter—your superiors. If there's anything that makes you look worse than screwing up, it's trying to cover your hoop and failing. So don't do it. Be open.

Now, you know and I know just how much drek is in that paragraph. First of all, the whole concept that "things are going to come out eventually" is laughable. Way back in the twentieth century, did the guys who took out Jimmy Hoffa feel the need to get out in front of the problem and confess what they had done before anyone found out? Or did they make sure Hoffa disappeared so thoroughly that no one would be tagged with offing him, ever? People always focus on the scandals that went public, like Brackhaven's dealings with racist policulbs, and then act like that's the inevitable way of things, that nothing gets hidden forever. Except things do get hidden, things we don't know about. What's the proof? *That you don't know about them.*

> Circular logic is not and never has been the same thing as proof.
> Snopes

Sometimes you see people in the media wondering why some executive or government official was caught in a cover-up, when we all know cover-ups don't work. It's because every megacorporation knows full well that that cover-ups work just fine, because they cover up so damn much each and every day.

I bring all this up because I've come across evidence of a cover up. I don't know how big it is, but it's at least big enough for an Renraku executive to want to bury some information deep. That makes this worth some money, either for blackmailing Renraku or selling to their opponents. What you do with it is up to you.

I have three items. The first is a transcript of a conversation picked up by shadowrunners working a job not related to this particular snippet. I've heard the recording, examined the audio file to look for traces of edits, and verified that the people named are actual Ares employees. From everything I've seen, this seems legit. The people involved are Alicia Tompkins, a vice president with Renraku America, and one of her subordinates, Director of Applied Technology Diego Solis. The snippet below is a brief exchange when Solis was leaving Tompkins' office while discussing another issue.

ALICIA TOMPKINS: Wait a minute. Close the door. <Sound of door closing> Have you found out who handled the payment for the research?

DIEGO SOLIS: Which research?

TOMPKINS: Are you so dense that I need to spell it out?

SOLIS: Oh. Right. Yes, it was a marketing associate named Barry Weaver.

TOMPKINS: Okay. If we take care of him properly, that should send the right message to Ineki. Just make sure the money trail gets cleaned up.

SOLIS: Of course.

Of note is the fact that I cannot find anyone named Barry Weaver anywhere in Renraku America. There are a number of Inekis, but the context makes me think this is Kuro Ineki, director of marketing.

Now on to the second thing. This is a scrap of an e-mail an acquaintance of mine happened into while tripping through the Resonance Realms. People come across all kinds of drek while wandering the Realms, and they usually discard it, but the sense of urgency made my friend bring this to me, thinking it could be worth something. I believe she's right. It's worth noting that identifying information shows the message came from our friend Alicia Tompkins at Renraku.

> *... don't know what the hell you were thinking with this report. What did you think we were paying for? If I wanted to read someone ripping us up and down, I could go on any one of a thousand Matrix forums. I know you're going to tell me you're just calling it like you see it, but you didn't even give me a head's up. You didn't even warn me. If anyone sees this*–anyone–*you'll do more than just ruin careers.*
>
> *I'm going to bury this whole thing. Bury* you.

The bad news is while there was a sender code, there was no information on a recipient. This might have been

a saved draft, instead of the final version. So connecting the dots, we have Tompkins covering up something marketing did, and then yelling at someone about a report, which is probably the thing marketing commissioned.

That leaves us one big question: Who wrote the report? I don't have a clear answer, but I have the third piece of information. It's a message found on a burner commlink that was pulled off the body of an ork found just north of Glow City. He was chromed up, but still had enough vital organs for the lead that was pumped into him to damage. There wasn't much on the phone, mainly tactical information passed between his team members (who were all using code names and burner 'links of their own). One message, though, is of interest to people outside their team. Here it is:

> *Gonna head north. Firepower is way more than I expected. Goddamn Ucheshi. Way more that Tompkins told us to expect. Gonna take some extra payment out of her hide.*

The next step in this seems clear—find out what Ucheshi is. And why Solis underestimated them.

That's as far as I've gotten. Might be time to find some help so I can get farther.

> Sounds like some old-fashioned pavement pounding. There's a guy named Kincaid that does that sort of thing. Maybe we should reach out to him.
> Cayman

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Renraku is preparing to launch a new commlink OS, codenamed Agemaki. They have staked a lot on this launch—especially Vice President for Consumer Technology Alicia Tompkins. She called in extra resources, leaned on every executive who has owed her a favor, and otherwise made it clear that her entire reputation and career rests on the success of Agemaki. To make sure she was on the right track, Tompkins hired an outside consultant, Horizon's Charisma Associates, to make sure people would love the OS as much as she thought they would. Honestly, her confidence was riding so high that she thought the report would essentially be a victory lap, confirming that she had a total winner on her hands that would be a blazing success in the marketplace.

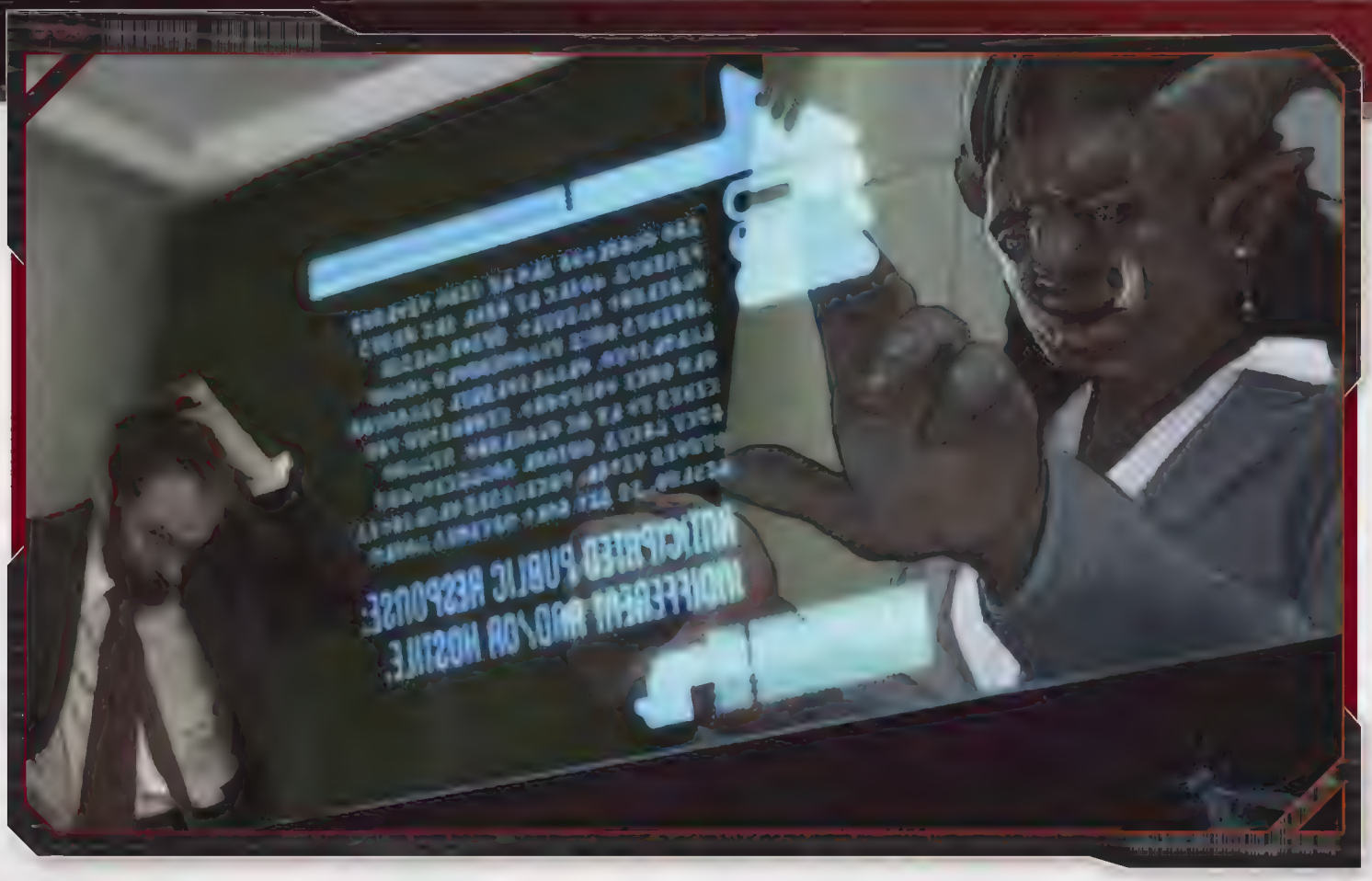
Unfortunately, that's not what the report told her. When she saw the initial draft, her eyes lingered on phrases like "aesthetics reminiscent of a bomb shelter," "cumbersome, non-intuitive interfaces," and, most gallingly, "executive bungling at every possible turn."

Tompkins resolved that maybe a few of the concerns in the report had merit, but making the needed changes paled in comparison to her number one priority: Making sure no one else ever read or heard about the report. With the help of her subordinate, Director of Applied Technology Diego Solis, she set about intimidating or eliminating anyone who knew about the report, including people from Charisma Associates and people within her own corporation who were involved with commissioning the work. This had to be done quickly and carefully so the deaths and disappearances would not raise too much suspicion, and what suspicion there was did not point back to Tompkins.

To this point, Tompkins has accomplished the following: Barry Weaver, a manager in the marketing department who directly commissioned the the report, has been re-assigned to a small marketing team in Renraku Asia subsidiary Fuchi Corporate Services to a project named Project Hanako. What only a few Renraku officials know is that there is no such thing Project Hanako; it is a place where people are sent who are not supposed to turn up again. In truth, Weaver's body ended up in a weighted suitcase that was pushed out of an airplane over the middle of the Pacific.

Weaver is gone, but his commlink is in Tompkins' hands; she has been using it to sent messages to Weaver's supervisor, Kuro Ineki, to intimidate Ineki into staying in line. Tompkins had no use for Weaver, but she felt Ineki could be a useful ally in the future if he is made to understand how the high-level game is played.

On the Charisma Associates side, there there four people in the group responsible for the report: Cole Dawson, Herman Vargas, Lucille Bates, and Gail Meeks. Dawson came down with a nasty virus that killed him



three weeks after Tompkins received the draft report. Vargas has been extracted to Renraku Asia and will likely be receiving an assignment to Project Hanako shortly. Bates resigned her position to be with ailing parents in Los Angeles, though she always told her co-workers she was from St. Louis. Meeks had a fatal heart attack while jogging. She was 32.

That's the background. The goal of the shadowrunners in this mission is to find out as much of this background as they can.

To start the mission, the runners are hired by a freelance Mr. Johnson who in turn has been hired by an information broker seeking knowledge on behind-the-scenes business dealings. That broker is the JackPoint member known as Cosmo, though Mr. Johnson will not reveal that. Mr. Johnson will provide the three pieces of evidence presented earlier in this chapter and tell the shadowrunners it's their job to find out what the snippets are about.

From there, the shadowrunners pursue their investigation. Plot Points 2, 3 and 4 may not go in strict order, as elements from one Plot Point feed back into another, depending on what angle the runners decide to investigate and what they find. Those three plot points should take them to Plot Point 5, where they are able to find the report that angered Tompkins. In Plot Point 6, they'll decide what to do with what they have found.

PLOT POINT 1

MEETING MR. JOHNSON

The runners are contacted by a freelance Mr. Johnson (use stats for Mr. Johnson, p. 391, *SR5*). His real name is Franklin Kahn, and he is not attached to any particular employer. He has a reputation as being fair and honest, but his research is sometimes lacking. If you want a lot of details on the job, he's not the guy to give them to you.

In this instance he is working for JackPoint member Cosmo, who is looking for some insider business information to sell or use in his own way. Mr. Johnson will not reveal his employer.

Mr. Johnson tells the runners he has a puzzle for them. All he has are three snippets of information, the three items listed in the opening fiction. He tells them that it's clear something big is being covered up, and he wants to know what. He can tell the runners that the people involved in the first conversation are Alicia Tompkins, a vice president with Renraku America, and one of her subordinates, Director of Applied Technology Diego Solis. He has no record of a Barry Weaver at Renraku North America, but the Ineki referred to is Kuro Ineki, director of marketing at Renraku North America.

That's all the information Mr. Johnson has. He offers the runners 2,500 nuyen apiece as incentive to start working (add 100 nuyen for each net hit on a Negotiation + Charisma Opposed Test, up to a maximum of 500

ALICIA TOMPKINS LEGWORK RESULTS

CONTACT	MATRIX SEARCH	RESULT
0	0	I think there's a park named after her in Manhattan. It's square.
1	1	She's vice president for consumer technology at Renraku America. She's a hard-charger—she doesn't want to stay in a vice president position for long.
2	4	She's given a lot of speeches recently about how the new Matrix requires entirely new thinking on how devices interact with it. Sounds like she has her sights set on something big.
3	5	She kept a real high public profile until about two months ago. Then she sort of dropped out of everything. Must be really focused on work
5	—	She's been working on something called Project Agemaki.
6	—	Agemaki is a new commlink OS, and Tompkins has been pushing this project hard. Staked her whole reputation on it.

more), and tells them they will be in for sizable bonuses based on the information they recover. For example, he tells them that finding Barry Weaver will bring them each a bonus of 5,000 nuyen, while finding the report mentioned in the snippets will bring them 10,000 apiece.

Mr. Johnson really has no more information, so the runners need to launch themselves into the world of legwork. The most likely leads they can follow are looking into who Tompkins is and what she was doing (Plot Point 2), what has become of Barry Weaver (Plot Point 3), and what "Ucheshi" is (Plot Point 4).

PLOT POINT 2

INVESTIGATING TOMPKINS

This is basic corporate legwork, but it needs to be done carefully. Tompkins has become ruthless about covering her tracks, and she will have little compunction about eliminating a team of shadowrunners if she gets wind that they are investigating her.

Tompkins is fairly high-profile, so most people with a knowledge of Renraku will know about her. Below is a table for what legwork, either through contacts (see p. 387, p. *SR5*) or Matrix Searches (see p. 241, *SR5*). Note that Tompkins has been very careful about keeping information about Project Agemaki off the public Matrix, so runners searching there will not find any information. See the table above for the results of legwork efforts.

Note that the data points above can be leveraged to get more information. For example, if the runners only find out the first three levels of information from a contact, they may be able to talk to other Renraku employees and use the knowledge they have discovered to sound knowledgeable, thus eliciting more information. This would be treated as a Con + Charisma Opposed Test, with a +2 dice pool bonus for presenting decent knowledge of who Tompkins is. The net hits on the test can be used on the Contact column of the legwork table to see what more the runners can learn.

Finding the data through a Matrix Search becomes easier if the runners login to a private network in Renraku North America headquarters. This will not be an easy building to infiltrate; besides armed security guards (use Corporate Security Lieutenant, p. 382, *SR5*), the entrance has Rating 6 MAD scanners (p. 362, *SR5*), and Rating 6 scanners checking the SINs of all who enter. Two invisible Force 4 spirits of air patrol the lobby, controlled by a security mage (use stats for Security Mage, p. 159) who watches from a bulletproof window overlooking the lobby. If the runners can get past this and hack into a Rating 11 private host, they can find the final two points on the legwork table with only 2 hits on a Matrix Search Test.

If the runners discover all of the information on the legwork table, they will have enough information to start asking good questions, but not enough to sell to Cosmo. There is, though, one critical piece of information they could get: Barry Weaver's commlink. Tompkins has it in a vault in her office, and she has been using it to send intimidating messages to Weaver' supervisor, Kuro Ineki. The commlink is in a vault hidden in the floor under her desk. It is secured by a Rating 6 print scanner maglock that uses her fingerprints. More details about the commlink are in Plot Point 3.

If the runners or their contacts glitch or critically glitch on any test while looking for information, word gets back to Tompkins that people are looking into her. This will have ramifications in Plot Point 6.

PLOT POINT 3

FINDING BARRY WEAVER

Much of this Plot Point could happen in parallel with Plot Point 2—runners could ask the same sources for information on both Tompkins and Weaver. Weaver is much harder to find, as there are no records of him in Renraku North America. A Matrix Search, including one from within Renraku headquarters, will recover no instances of his name.

Talking to Renraku employees or contacts might get results. Five hits on any Renraku-related Knowledge skill test by a contact or runner will locate Weaver as a marketing employee who had been under the supervision of Kuro Ineki.

Ineki is still with Renraku North America and reluctant to talk to anyone. He will not allow the runners into his office or let them make an appointment. He is a man of routine, though; if runners can find a way to talk to anyone in the marketing department, they'll find out that Ineki leaves at 6:30 each night and goes to eat Downtown at the restaurant at Hotel Nikko. Intercepting him en route or at the restaurant should not be difficult.

The runners will need to break out their interrogation skills to get information out of Ineki. Ineki knows that Weaver was transferred to Project Hanako in Fuchi Corporate Services in Japan, and while he doesn't know that Hanako is nothing more than a shell, he has heard rumblings that it is not a good place to go. Plus, he has received messages from Weaver's commlink saying things like "If you keep asking about me, you'll join me," and "It's so easy to disappear." Ineki is on edge and nervous about his safety. Runners should capitalize on this in their interrogation. They need to beat him in either a Con + Charisma Opposed Test or Intimidation + Charisma vs. Charisma + Willpower Test; use Mid-Level Corporate Suit, p. 157, for his stats. If they succeed, he will tell them about Weaver's transfer, and then beg them not to tell anyone that he told them.

Once the runners have that information, they need to find out about Project Hanako. Flying to Neo-Tokyo would be expensive and time consuming, but it is not necessary in the age of the Matrix. Some legwork in the Renraku Asia host will help them get the info they need. All they need to do is mention the name in the host; if they do, word will be passed to Juro Himura, who is with Ranraku Asia's Unspecified Services and does not have a title. He will summon the runners for a polite virtual conversation.

The good news for the runners is that Renraku Asia division does not view Tompkins favorably, and they have no desire to see her get more power. Himura is not going to share things that endanger the corporation, but he is also not going to be hostile. He does, however, want to protect the integrity of Project Hanako. If he can be convinced that the runners will hurt Tompkins (giving a bonus on Social Tests), he will share information with them. What he tells them is that they have been lied to. Weaver was scheduled to join Fuchi Corporate Services, but he never arrived. His SIN was registered boarding a plane in Seattle, but he never got off. Himura says that finding him would involve a long search of the Pacific Ocean.

At least a piece of Weaver, though, is still active, Himura says—his commlink. Himura reports that messages have been sent from the commlink. He had people looking into it, and he can provide help to the runners on two conditions: 1) That they pay him 5,000 nuyen (runners can ask for and receive a reimbursement from Mr. Johnson; 2) That they promise that they will share what they learn about Weaver and why he disappeared with him. If the runners agree, he sends them a message containing the coordinates of the commlink. It won't take much effort for the runners to discover the coordinates are in the middle of the Renraku North America headquarters. The location information includes elevation, so the runners will be able to locate the commlink as being in Tompkins' office.

At this point the runners know Weaver's fate—transferred to Fuchi Corporate Services, then lost over the Pacific—so that they can collect the 5,000-nuyen-per-runner bonus offered by Mr. Johnson.

Getting into the office will not be easy. The details on the entry security are in Plot Point 2. On top of that, there are two Corporate Security Lieutenants (p. 382, *SR5*) on each floor, as well as a Doberman drone (p. 466, *SR5*) with an AK-97 (p. 428, *SR5*) mounted on it, controlled by a security rigger (use Drone Rigger, p. 124, *SR5*). Tompkins' office, when she is not in it, is secured with a Rating 6 maglock. If Tompkins is there (which she is from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, with frequent absences for meetings), use the stats for Mid-level Corporate Suit, p. 157, but raise the Body to 7 and the Strength to 8, then lower the Charisma to 4 to reflect the fact she is a troll). No Con or Intimidation will convince Tompkins to give up the commlink, so if she's there, she needs to be killed, unconscious, or restrained so that the runners can search for the commlink.

The commlink is off, meaning it won't show up on a wireless scan. It has the messages sent to Ineki, fully implicating Tompkins in his disappearance, and one other piece of information. Tompkins had meant to erase the whole thing, but she missed a small reminder note Weaver left for himself: "Cole Dawson @C—b4ugoH0me". It shouldn't take much for runners to recognize that as a password—but to what? That will come if they manage to find out who Cole Dawson is in Plot Point 4.

PLOT POINT 4

TRACKING UCHESHI

There are a few ways to find out what "Ucheshi" refers to. First, the runners may track down the body from which the commlink was pulled. They can ask a law enforcement contact (threshold of 3 on a Knowledge test), someone with knowledge of the Barrens (threshold of 3), or someone with knowledge of Seattle shadowrunners (threshold of 2). They'll learn that the runner found north of Glow City was a weapons specialist named Sefu. Originally from Kenya, Sefu arrived in Seattle two years ago and joined a number of East African immigrants living in Puyallup. His native language is Swahili, and Swahili expressions made their way into everyday speech.

A Matrix Search can help them find out what Ucheshi means, but it will be easier if the runners know Sefu's background. The threshold for finding the meaning is 3 if they don't know Sefu's background, but only 1 if they

do. They will find out that Ucheshi is the Swahili word for "charming."

Finding out what *that* means will require more legwork. This could mean more Matrix Searching, but this is obscure enough that they need 8 hits. Alternately, they could go and talk to Sefu's friends in Puyallup. Saying nice things about him and saying they are looking into his death is all it will take to make some of the people willing to help. They will share that "Ucheshi" was Sefu's name for a corporation that was causing him some trouble in a job: Charisma Associates.

The runners now have somewhere to look, but they need to figure out what to look for. All traces of Tompkins, Solis, and Weaver have been scrubbed from Charisma databases. So what do they look for?

The runners need Weaver's commlink to make progress here. If they don't have it, this could be a good time for Tompkins to get a little reckless, sending them a message that says "You'll never find me, but you will join me" from Weaver's commlink. They can then trace it to get the information they need (see Plot Point 3 for information on finding the commlink).

Once they have the commlink, they may understand that @C means "at Charisma," and they can search for Cole Dawson. They will find that he was an employee who passed away from a nasty virus about a month ago. The runners then need to log onto his account in the Charisma Associates host—fortunately, they have his password from Weaver's commlink. Time to find what's there.

PLOT POINT 5

UNCOVERING THE REPORT

While having Dawson's password is nice, it's not enough by itself. The runners need to enter the host and be able to edit files on it, meaning a hacker will need a mark on it. If they manage this (the host is Rating 10), the password will direct them to Dawson's files. Most have been erased, but the Renraku hackers forgot to check his trash bin. There is a draft of the report on Project Agemaki in the trash.

The draft has everything the runners need to connect the dots. It names Tompkins as the leader of the project, then proceeds to eviscerate her. The runners should easily understand how devastating this would be, and why Tompkins wanted it thoroughly buried. They may stop to ponder the loss of life brought about by a bad computer operating system, but hey, it's the Sixth World. That's how business works.

The runners can now report to Mr. Johnson.

PLOT POINT 6

GETTING PAID

The good news is that the runners should have enough information to collect 15,000 nuyen worth of bonuses from Mr. Johnson. The bad news is that Mr. Johnson's weakness at research is about to cost them.

That's assuming they want to turn over the information to Mr. Johnson. They have some decisions to make. First, they need to decide if they're going to tell Himura about what they found. He will not pay them, as that was it part of the bargain, but he will do a favor for them at a later point in time (see **Favor for a Friend**, p. 389, *SR5*; treat Himura as having a Connection Rating if 4, though he should not be a full contact). If they do not tell them, he will make a point of making their life difficult the next time they encounter Ranraku Asia.

The runners might decide not to turn the information to Mr. Johnson, and instead see what Tompkins will pay them to help her bury the information. This will be lucrative, as she will pay 25,000 nuyen a runner. She will demand that everything be destroyed and not shared. This will earn the runners the enmity of Cosmo, and he will spread the word around JackPoint, causing the runners' Notoriety to increase by 1.

If the runners go ahead and turn the info over to Mr. Johnson, the meet takes place at an Indian restaurant called the Mogul in Bellevue. Mr. Johnson knows his employer will want details and proof, so he is careful in getting information from the runners. Unfortunately, he is not aware that his commlink has been compromised. He did some searching on his own for Tompkins, including asking some questions in a Matrix forum. Tompkins got wind of this, surreptitiously tracked Mr. Johnson down over the Matrix, and tagged his commlink. She heard the call to the runners, and she is going to interrupt the meeting when it happens.

The forces that go after the runners depend on how alerted she is. If she got wind of the runners's searches or if they ran into her when lifting Weaver's commlink, she sends four Elite Corporate Security officers and one Lieutenant (p. 384, *SR5*). Otherwise, it's four regular Corporate Security and one Lieutenant (p. 382, *SR5*).

The officers walk into the restaurant during the meeting and ask the runners and Mr. Johnson to come with them quietly. They have notified local law enforcement that they are on business, which means that if law enforcement is called, when they show up they will side with the corporate security. The officers don't want the situation to get out of control, but they also are willing to use force if the runners are not compliant. Regular corporate security will initially use stun batons if fighting breaks out, while the elite security will use their HK 227s loaded with gel rounds.

Getting out with Mr. Johnson would be nice, but not strictly necessary. Cosmo will find a way to reach out to the runners, get their information, and get them paid.

KNIVES OUT

I've been catching up with some contacts over in the JIS lately. If you're heading over there for business, bring some little yellow pills with you.
Kia

Are you saying things in Japan seem muddled for foreigners? Maybe if they bothered to read up on the place before visiting, they'd manage to not offend everyone they come across.
Rigger X

Can we just put him in charge of tourism and call it a day?
Slamm-0!

As I was saying, the Japanacorps are still playing nice on JIS soil when it comes to avoiding direct conflict with one another, but the entire situation resembles a middle-school cafeteria more and more every day.
Kia

It's cute you think most people here went to middle school.
Rigger X

Imperial courts, corporate boardrooms, and middle-school cafeterias have a lot in common. You have a lot more to fear from treachery and rumormongers than physical threats ...
Kia

We obviously went to different middle schools.
Bull

... but the stakes are that much higher in Japan right now. Everyone is scurrying to get in the good graces of Empress Hitomi, while at the same time trying to cut the legs out from under their opposition. It's hard to overstate her influence on things—she has tremendous spiritual authority, and that carries a lot of weight with the public, to say nothing of her financial clout as a major shareholder at Shiawase. Her public disapproval can significantly impact a company's bottom line, since there are literally millions of consumers who take their spiritual-consumerist cues from her. As you know, I've been keeping an eye on Shiawase's Market Forecasting and Information Department recently. Its head, Ichiro Kiyomoto, has been jockeying back and forth with the person he replaced, Nigel Coltrane, but neither has been able to deal a decisive blow. Coltrane has been maneuvering to discredit Kiyomoto ever since. He needs to act decisively—and quickly—to reaffirm the Empress' confidence in him, but no one knows what the next phase of his plan is. Kiyomoto's angle is obvious: He wants to keep Coltrane out. It looks like Coltrane has been putting out feelers to various technomancer communities through intermediaries for some reason or another. He was also poking around for some of MCT's work on technomancers, probably looking for ways to demonstrate both his loyalty and his usefulness to Hitomii.
Kia

Great, just great.
Netcat

Apparently some of MCT's research was destroyed by runners a while back and MCT responded by ratcheting up security for those sites to whatever level exists after Zero-Zone.
Kia

Eleven-Zone?
Kane

Either way, it looks like Coltrane has shifted his attention away from hitting MCT directly and is casting a wider net for technomancer research in general.
Kia

Sadly, it won't be hard for him to find potential targets.
Netcat

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Every man's patience has its limits, and Nigel Coltrane's patience is just about up. Coltrane, the former head of Shiawase's Market Forecasting and Information Department, has been waging a shadow war against the man who currently holds that job, Ichiro Kiyomoto. So far, neither man has been able to execute a decisive move. Frustrated with the lack of resolution, Coltrane is making a last, desperate play to discredit Kiyomoto and demonstrate his own value to Empress Hitomi and the board of directors before his power base erodes completely. Meanwhile, Kiyomoto hopes to catch his foe overextended so he may finally unravel Coltrane's career. Either way, the consequences for Shiawase could be profound and the runners' choices will go a long way toward determining which man gains the upper hand.

Coltrane, sensitive to the Empress Hitomi's attitude toward technomancers, initially hoped to obtain incriminating evidence of the experiments Mitsuhama Computer Technologies conducted on them in an effort to shame the megacorp and weaken its position in the Japanese Imperial State without explicitly violating the facade of cooperation between the Japanese megacorps. By shaming the megacorp most opposed to Empress Hitomi's rule, Coltrane planned to curry enough favor to solidify his position. However, MCT's reputation for security—especially when it comes to that material—proved well-deserved; Coltrane feared that committing enough resources to overcome MCT's Zero-Zone policy would tip his hand, so he devised an alternative plan. Instead of stealing the datafiles from MCT, he would steal similar ones from a lesser corp, doctor them to make it appear as though MCT funded the program, and then plant them in the MCT host. Coltrane doubts that this will be enough to weaken MCT on its own, but he hopes to draw the rival megacorp into a very ugly, very visible public relations battle after MCT's predictably fervent public denial. Additionally, Coltrane has made contact with a few small tribes of technomancers with the intent of playing off their righteous anger once the story breaks, sowing even more chaos for MCT. And finally, Coltrane intends to reveal (or manufacture) evidence linking Kiyomoto to MCT and their dubious research program.

Using an independent Mr. Johnson named Cassidy to mask his involvement, Coltrane points the runners in the direction of Manadyne, a double-A corporation that has been conducting research on technomancers under the name Project Monad. The Project Monad files are stored offline, so the runners will have to infiltrate a Manadyne facility to obtain them. Manadyne's facility is what you would expect a research lab owned by a multi-billion-nuyen corporation dedicated to magical research would be: not an easy place for mages or shamans to do their thing. Its physical and Matrix defenses, on the other hand, are fairly pedestrian, so a savvy team of runners should find some element to exploit.

Once the runners hand the files over, Cassidy asks them to lie low for a few days. Prior to his position as head of MFID, Coltrane ran the Matrix security division of Shiawase, but even he needs a bit of time to alter the files to implicate MCT and add a bit of code that will leak the files to other hosts after a certain period of time. During this window, a low-level MFID functionary named Minori Nakamura discovers evidence of Coltrane's scheme. Torn between duty to Shiawase and loyalty to her old boss, Nakamura approaches the runners on her own in an attempt to derail their efforts without betraying Coltrane to Kiyomoto. She earnestly believes (perhaps correctly) that her efforts align with the best interests of the Shiawase kami.

For Coltrane's plan to work, the files must originate from MCT's host. The runners are tasked with uploading the files to a hardwired MCT terminal, which are generally tightly guarded. Fortunately, Cassidy knows of one outside of the typical bunker-like MCT facilities. Unfortunately, it means breaking into the opulent house of a divisional vice president during a company gala with local Yakuza working security for the evening. The only easy day was yesterday, chummer. The house is MCT property and its owner, Yojiro Mizuno, certainly approves of MCT's Zero-Zone policy, but the realities of having dozens of house guests—many of whom are MCT employees—makes implementing a strict Zero-Zone policy impractical. Mizuno, and much of his security, straddle

the line between irritating and loathsome, making the requisite level of care difficult to maintain.

For background information about the Shiawase Corporation, Ichiro Kiyomoto, and Nigel Coltrane, see p. 161, *Corporate Guide*. For more details about recent developments and changes in Shiawase leadership, see p. 145, *Storm Front*.

PLOT POINT 1

The runners' usual fixer alerts them to some potential business with a well-known Mr. Johnson named Cassidy (use **Mr. Johnson (Prominent)**, p. 158). Cassidy has a reputation for both independence and discretion, taking jobs from all the major corps without playing favorites. Meeting the team in a private room at a borderline-seedy Irish bar named Shenanigan's, Cassidy explains that he needs the runners to steal some datafiles from an offline archive housed in a storage facility. He offers the runners 10,000 nuyen each with the understanding that success will lead to a second, more lucrative job shortly thereafter. The second job must take place in exactly ten days, but outside of that, Cassidy will not discuss any details of the second job before the first leg is complete. Cassidy is a gregarious, loud, and generally fun person to be around—a complete break from the dour, immensely serious Mr. Johnsons with whom the runners may have done business in the past. This is partly an act intended to lower the runners' guards and also test how they respond to unexpected social situations. Cassidy is more than capable of being moody and petty, as the runners will learn if they do not conform to his ideas of propriety. Further research into Cassidy may reveal that he's on a bit of a bad streak, with his last few teams failing their assignments. If asked about this, Cassidy acknowledges the misfortune, but adds he's learned from his mistakes and intends to only hire top-shelf talent from now on. Should the runners ask about Cassidy's employer, warn them that this would be a fairly serious breach of etiquette given his reputation for neutrality and discretion. If they insist, Cassidy explains he has a strict "don't

ask, don't tell" policy when it comes to these sorts of things. Runners who attempt a teamwork test during the negotiation with Cassidy will be politely stopped as Cassidy jokingly feigns confusion at carrying on multiple conversations at the same time. Pushing the issue of his employer's identity or insisting on jointly negotiating will sour Cassidy's opinion of the runners, and they will suffer a -3 dice penalty to all social interactions with him for the rest of the adventure, including the initial negotiation.

While Cassidy does have a strict "don't ask, don't tell" policy, that hasn't precluded him from adopting a "poke around and see if you can earn a little nuyen on the side" policy to help offset some of his recent losses. Since Cassidy was contacted via an anonymous Matrix address, he cannot say for certain that Shiawase hired him, but he has his suspicions and has spent some time trying to confirm his instincts. If the team's decker tries to hack Cassidy's Rating 6 commlink, she won't find any concrete evidence, but she will likely notice that Cassidy recently spent a fair amount of time poking around on the Shiawase host. Obviously, getting caught doing this will have dire repercussions for their working relationship.

PLOT POINT 2

The Manadyne storage facility is located in an industrial park in Auburn, or similar blue-collar neighborhood if the players are outside of Seattle. The park is humming with activity during the day, making it much harder to sneak in undetected. At night, most buildings' operations are managed by drones or skeleton crews, allowing reasonably discreet runners to get to the perimeter without issue. While the physical and Matrix security of the facility are average at best, its magical security, led by a Dog shaman named Hannah, is exceptional. Security is composed of two Security Grunts (p. 159) per runner as well as Hannah and a Security Mage (p. 159). Hannah is extremely protective of her staff, who she considers her "pack," and operating procedures emphasize force protection. Staff members never patrol alone, and defensive tactics like suppressive fire and using cover to maximum effect are the norm. Given time to prepare, the security guards arm themselves with shotguns or submachine guns from the armory and establish defensive positions at the building's chokepoints. The armory does not contain heavier ordnance than that, but gamemasters should feel free to add other non-lethal items like riot shields, gas masks, and flash-bang grenades. Hannah typically serves a support role, while the Security Mage uses mage sight goggles and a prism switch to cast spells from the armory while safely behind a security door.

If the runners case the facility during the day, they will notice a large landscaping truck make a delivery of a large quantity of fertilizer. By making an appropriate Knowledge Skill (2) Test or by passing the information along to a relevant contact, the runners learn that the fertilizer delivered is not used for grass, which is the only visible flora on the facility's plot. In fact, the facility is home to Manadyne's experiments with guardian vines. False exterior walls hide the Awakened vines from sight, but any attempt to pass through the walls while astrally projecting will—probably to the regret of the runner—uncover them.

The files Cassidy requires are on the second floor behind an unusual-looking security door at the end of a short hall. The door's locking mechanism is a Rating 4 print scanner (Hannah's palmprint will unlock it) but its tumbler is a throwback: an ornate doorknob. The doorknob serves as a lynchpin for one of Hannah's alchemical preparations. Anyone touching the knob will trigger a Force 6 Trid Phantasm of a blank wall. Runners who fail to roll five or more hits on the Intuition + Logic roll to resist the spell are unable to distinguish between the wall and the door, which will likely make disabling the maglock difficult.

PLOT POINT 3

The runners are told to keep a low profile for a few days, giving Cassidy's employer enough time to tweak the stolen files. Once they go to ground, the runner who has been handling the team's negotiations receives a message from an unknown commcode requesting a face-to-face meeting at a local Shinto shrine the next day at noon. Attempts to trace or otherwise respond to the message quickly reveal that the message originated from a cheap commlink purchased with a low-quality fake SIN. The runners will likely be nervous about the security breach—let them sweat it out for a bit. If they attend the meeting, an MFID analyst named Minori Nakamura discreetly approaches them and asks to speak with them. She explains that the runners risk spiritual impurity, and she seeks to avoid this. Nakamura suggests that they accept the second part of the mission but simply upload an incomplete set of the datafiles. Having written some of the code Coltrane is using, she is confident that the runners' employer does not have a reliable means of verifying their success or failure in the short term, so they should be able to collect their payment without issue. Nakamura is unable to offer nuyen as an incentive and understands that appealing to runners to act in a spiritually appropriate way is likely to be met with blank stares. If the runners accept, she can make the next part of the mission less risky, and survival has its own universal appeal. Having hacked the party planner's host, she can provide two runners who speak Japanese with invitations to the party, or add four runners to the staff list in whatever capacity they choose, save security. Nakamura understands that these actions are, in their own way, also fraught with spiritual risk, but

she is willing to accept the burden herself rather than invite the ire of the Shiawase kami.

Nakamura is not trained as a field agent—her specialty is encryption—so she is not entirely comfortable with subterfuge and feels genuinely conflicted about acting without authority. She rationalizes it, though, by telling herself she is acting in the best interests of the Shiawase kami, which supersedes Coltrane's schemes. Given the location of the meet and Nakamura's concern for spiritual matters, the runners may recognize Shiawase as their employer. Nakamura's lack of training in fieldcraft makes it fairly easy to track down her name and occupation—her efforts at discretion are aimed at making it difficult for Shiawase, not the runners, to track her.

Gamemasters should play up the ritualized nature of visiting a Shinto shrine (see Locations for some ideas) to underscore Nakamura's own sense of spirituality and to hint at the larger spiritual stakes of the runners' mission. In addition to whatever gaps Nakamura may fill in for the runners, this scene is intended to be atmospheric; gamemasters can slow the pace down, if only for a moment, before the pace picks back up.

PLOT POINT 4

Once the alterations to the files are complete, Cassidy fills the runners in on the second job. Any effort to trace this data must end on MCT's host, which means it needs to be directly uploaded to that host from an MCT facility. Cassidy cheerfully informs the runners that this would normally mean breaking into an archetypical MCT Zero-Zone with a conspicuous budget for milspec gear, but he has managed to find a happy alternative. To guard against deckers, senior management have hardlined terminals in their homes. Generally, these sorts of places are almost as tightly guarded as MCT's business properties, but Cassidy's sources tell him that the divisional vice president, Yojiro Mizuno, is hosting an extravagant party to celebrate last quarter's numbers. Between the guests and staff, there should be enough additional foot traffic for the runners to infiltrate the house and upload the files without tripping an alarm. Cassidy stresses that while sneaking may be the best choice, the most important thing is that no one suspects the terminal has been tampered with. If the runners get noticed, they need to have a plausible cover story for their presence. Cassidy increases the pay to 20,000 nuyen each for this part of the mission, with the expectation that the runners will conduct themselves discreetly.

Crashing a party hosted by MCT executives is difficult; crashing one hosted by Mizuno is even harder, largely because Mizuno is a generally loathsome individual—many of the guests are attending out of a sense of professional obligation and not out of fondness for their host. Embodying all the worst xenophobic and racist stereotypes of MCT, Mizuno has a strict "Japanese-only" policy when it comes to language as well as an equally strict "no trolls or orks" policy when it comes to houseguests. While not all the guests are Japanese, they all speak at least a smattering of the language, and the party's hand-written invitations are entirely in kanji. Runners posing as guests who cannot speak at least some Japanese will quickly draw attention to themselves, likely earning them a Yakuza escort for the evening, and trolls and orks will be turned away at the door, no matter what their invitations say. A number of catering and entertainment companies have been hired for this event. Service staff are all expected to understand the very basics of the language, but the majority of the hired help assigned to tasks such as food preparation and setting up decor only speak English. Mizuno is more than happy to hire cheap labor to set up pavilion tents and outdoor tables; trolls and orks are welcome to serve as hired help as long as they keep a low profile and stay out of sight.

Unfortunately for the runners, there are no openings on the security team that they might be able to fill because Mizuno has personally handled that aspect of things by hiring roughly a dozen Yakuza soldiers (use Organized Crime Grunt, p. 383, *SR5*). Additionally, Mizuno has hired what he thinks of as his own living, breathing panic button: a sociopathic physical adept named Kaze. Entirely unsuitable for civilized or even semi-civilized society, Kaze is assigned to the kitchen, where he makes life miserable for staff members who draw his attention, ceaselessly bullying and harassing them. The unenviable task of keeping Kaze in check and coordinating the rest of the troops falls to a shategashira (lieutenant) named Masumi. (Use the elite decker's stats from p. 384, removing all augmentations except for the cybereyes and datajack; also replace the armor with an armored jacket. Masumi only carries an Ares Predator V as his weapon.) Masumi understands that his job is to keep his men as discreet as possible, so he has instructed them to avoid making messes in public. Nevertheless, if things start to go sideways, all bets are off.

LOCATIONS

SHENANIGAN'S

Located in a rougher part of town on the first floor of a multipurpose building, Shenanigan's is a fairly seedy Irish bar frequented by regulars with decidedly mixed reviews on the Matrix. A few AROs of leprechauns badger customers whose AR filters are set too loosely, but for the most part the smoke stains and whiskey are authentic. Cassidy meets the runners in a private room, stocked with its own liquor cabinet. Matrix reception is spotty, giving the bar a Noise Rating of 2.

MANADYNE FACILITY

Tucked away in a corporate park, this two-story, concrete building ostensibly serves as a low-use storage facility for Manadyne. In reality, many of Project Monad's most sensitive files are housed in an offline terminal on the second floor, and the building's defenses are calibrated accordingly. The building itself is set back ten meters from a three-meter tall fence topped with concertina. A guardhouse separates the fence's two gates: one intended for vehicles and the other for pedestrians. To activate the vehicle gate, two conditions must be met: First, the pressure plate in front of the gate must register a weight in excess of 2,500 pounds; and second, the vehicle must broadcast a Manadyne-registered RFID security tag. The pedestrian gate is monitored by a security camera three meters off the ground and contains a Rating 5 maglock with a Rating 2 anti-tamper system. The guardhouse is staffed by one Security Grunt (p. 159) during business hours and contains a panic button. A paved walkway leads from the pedestrian gate to the main entrance of the facility and loops around the entire building.

Traveling off either the walkway or driveway onto any of the natural terrain after sundown will draw the attention of a Force 5 Spirit of Earth. Failure to speak that evening's password ("Shibboleth") before the end of its first Initiative Pass will cause the spirit to attack.

A Perception + Intuition (4) Test reveals that the mirrored windows on the facility are fake and that the entire facility is, in fact, windowless. If the runners examine the building's roof and succeed on a Perception + Intuition (3) Test, they recognize that an irrigation system runs along the perimeter of the roof, although there are no plants visible. A single hit on a botany-related Knowledge skill reveals this information as well. A small gap exists between the exterior wall and the facility itself. Inside this gap, fed by a complex system of solar lighting, Force 4 guardian vines cover the four walls (but not roof or basement) of the building. The main door and the loading bay door do not have guardian vines behind them.

Despite the facility's fairly impressive perimeter defenses, it is lightly staffed. During the day, a dozen wageslaves diligently work throughout the facility. Security Grunts—two for every runner—complement a pair of Security Mages (p. 159), with staff changes occurring at 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Since the building is dedicated to physical storage, its host (Rating 4, Sleaze 4, Attack 5, Firewall 6, Dataprocessing 7) is relatively weak. No information about Project Monad is housed on the host, although runners can find files relating to staffing, the care of the guardian vines, and delivery schedules.

SHINTO SHRINE

A tranquil oasis in the midst of the sprawl, at first glance, the Shinto shrine Nakamura picks for the meet feels like something out of a different era. Dedicated to Hachiman, this shrine occasionally draws the unwanted attention of samurai poseurs, so basic security measures have been implemented. Signs politely request that visitors deposit weapons in lockboxes just outside the shrine's entrance. The torii (gate) at the shrine's entrance hides a MAD scanner (Rating 5) in the event that someone fails to comply. Once past the torii, the runners ought to ritualistically wash their hands and mouths to purify themselves (instructions are provided via AR). A wizened Japanese woman with a toothless smile suggests to one of the runners that he or she make a small donation to the shrine and pick a fortune from the box she carries. Gamemasters should take this opportunity to spook the players a bit, giving them a vague-but-possibly-ominous fortune. Nakamura waits for the runners in the shrine's main hall.

MIZUNO'S HOUSE

Yojiro Mizuno's house is a shrine dedicated to his favorite object of veneration: himself. Its cavernous rooms, often with cathedral ceilings and indoor balconies, serve to display fetishes of Mizuno's wealth and success. The grounds are comparatively small—the house is far too big for the lot—and crowded with party-related activities. The Yakuza on security duty check SINs not broadcasting an invitation as well as any ork or troll who wanders out of staff-designated areas. Gamemasters should note the Concealability of the runners' weapons and what sort of armor they wear to the event. Anything less than business attire is considered gauche at best.

Mizuno loves to give tours of his house and will certainly oblige if asked, assuming a decent number of people can be roped into the procession, but the party is otherwise confined to the ground floor and lawn. Each stairwell has a Yakuza sentry who will direct wandering guests back to the party. Mizuno's private office (which will not be included on any tour he conducts) is located on the second floor and is behind a door with a Rating 4 voice recognition system with a Rating 3 anti-tamper system.

SECURITY GRUNT

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 3)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS
5	4	4 (6)	4	4	3	4	3	4	5

Initiative	8 (10) + 1D6
Condition Monitor	11
Limits	Physical 6 (7), Mental 5, Social 5
Armor	12 (+2)
Skills	Athletics skill group 3, Clubs 5, Etiquette 3 (Corporate +2), Firearms skill group 6, Perception 4, Throwing Weapons 4
Knowledge Skills	Small Unit Tactics 4
Augmentations	Cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision], datajack, reaction enhancers (2)
Gear	Armored jacket [12], commlink (Device Rating 4), helmet [+2]
Weapons	Ares Predator V [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(7), DV 8P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 15(c), w/ 2 clips Stick-n-Shock ammo, 2 clips regular ammo] Defiance T-250 [Shotgun, Acc 4(6), DV 10P, AP –1, SS/SA, RC —, 5(m), w/ 15 rounds flechette ammo, top-mounted external smartgun system] Ingram Smartgun X [Submachine Gun, Acc 4(6), DV 8P, AP —, BF/FA, RC 2, 32(c), w/ 2 clips Stick-n-Shock ammo, 2 clips regular ammo] Stun baton [Club, Acc 4(5), Reach 1, DV 9S(e), AP –5, w/ 10 charges, personalized grip]

SECURITY MAGE

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M
3	3	4	3	5	5	4	3	4	5

Initiative	8 + 1D6
Condition Monitor	10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 7, Social 6
Armor	12
Skills	Assensing 3, Counterspelling 4, Etiquette 3 (Corporate +2), Pistols 4, Spellcasting 5 (Illusion Spells +2), Summoning 5
Knowledge Skills	Small Unit Tactics 4
Spells	Bugs, Hot Potato, Increase Reflexes, Mass Confusion, Phantasm
Gear	Armored jacket [12], contacts (rating 2 w/ image link and smartlink), commlink (Device Rating 4), mage sight goggles, sustaining spell focus (2, health spells)
Weapons	Ares Predator V [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(7), DV 8P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 15(c), w/ 2 clips Stick-n-Shock ammo, 2 clips regular ammo]

HANNAH, DOG SHAMAN

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
1	2	4	2	5	3	5	5	4	6	6

Initiative	9 + 1D6
Astral Initiative	10 + 3D6
Condition Monitor	10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 6, Social 8
Armor	12
Skills	Assensing 4, Counterspelling 5, Enchanting spell group 6, Etiquette 3 (Corporate +2), First Aid 4, Leadership 5, Pistols 4, Ritual Spellcasting 3, Spellcasting 6, Tracking 3
Knowledge Skills	Small Unit Tactics 4
Spells	Clairvoyance, Clout, Detect Enemies, Eyes of the Pack, Heal, Prophylaxis
Alchemical Preparations	Fling, Ignite, Trid Phantasm
Gear	Armored jacket [12], contacts [Rating 2 w/ image link, smartlink], commlink (Device Rating 4), mage sight goggles, Sustaining spell focus (2, health spells)
Weapons	Ares Predator V [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(7), DV 8P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 15(c), w/ 2 clips Stick-n-Shock ammo, 2 clips regular ammo]

KAZE

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
5	6	12 (14)	5	4	2	5	2	4	6	6

Initiative	9 (11) + 1D6 (3D6)
Condition Monitor	11
Limits	Physical 7, Mental 5, Social 5
Armor	12
Skills	Athletics skill group 7, Close Combat skill group 6, Etiquette 1 (Yakuza +2), Perception 5
Knowledge Skills	Small Unit Tactics 4
Qualities	Natural Athlete, Uncouth
Initiate Grade	1
Metamagics	Power Point
Adept Powers	Combat Sense 2, Critical Strike (Blades), Improved Ability 1(Blades), Improved Reflexes 2, Light Body 4, Riposte 2, Wall Running
Gear	Armored jacket [12], Erika Elite commlink (DR 4)
Weapons	Combat Knife [Blade, Acc 6, DV 8P, AP –3, Rating 2 weapon focus]

GUARDIAN VINES

Originally found in Amazonia, guardian vines are now cultivated throughout the world. The astral form of a guardian vine can move independently of its physical form like an astrally projecting magician, although the vine's astral form remains rooted to its physical form and can only lash out a few meters in astral space. Guardian vines actively defend themselves from predators, using both their physical and astral tendrils to trap and ensnare those who come into contact with them.

Both in physical and astral combat, guardian vines attempt to grapple their opponents, using Subduing combat (p. 195, *SR5*). Typically, a vine will attempt to maintain a grapple and inflict Stun damage until its opponent is knocked unconscious or disrupted. Guardian vines are rated by Force, which usually reflects a greater density of the vine on the surface upon which it grows.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F	F	F	F+2	F	F-1	F	F	F/2	3	3

Initiative	(Fx2) + 2D6
Astral Initative	(Fx2) + 3D6
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Perception, Unarmed Combat
Notes	Guardian vines have +1 Reach.

SHIPPING CONCERNS

THE NEXT BIG WAVE: MAERSK

POSTED BY: KANE

Maersk is a big AA with a lot of ties to other megacorporations through their shipping and logistics deals, but they aren't just a bunch of boats, docks, and warehouses. Their operations span land, sea, and air with an ever-increasing market share as they claim more ports and shipping hubs. They operate airlines, security firms, Matrix providers, and oil and gas companies, and they even have a biomedical division. The biggest concern the other big fish should have is not just Maersk's present size, but their expansions in recent months, and the plans they have for the future.

Despite their huge size, they've never been an AAA corp, and the megacorporate audit has pissed them off something fierce. Their plans always have an element of taking shots at their rivals; it's now grown well beyond a simple element.

AFRICAN EXPANSION

With their mobile port systems able to turn almost any piece of shoreline into a port, Maersk has been skirting and scouting the coasts of Africa, tagging every possible spot that is near a resource hub for a shipping stop. They have even developed contracts with several local groups that are ready to bring their resources to market through Maersk. This is great for the AA, but indigenous Africans are getting the short end of the stick (or the long end of the whip, to bring back some old-time colonial-era evil) and are being pressed into service by local warlords to dig their goods up and move them out. Now, I'm not some bleeding heart, but when there's as much money as Maersk has to throw around at these things, the locals should really earn more than slave wages.

As most of us could guess, this has also increased the number of pirates hunting the waters around Africa. In turn, this has led to an increased focus on water operations for the security firms trying to get a foothold on the birthplace of humanity. Needless to say, Maersk's own Tyr, Inc., already seems to have extensive contracts.

Their expansion efforts into Africa are not winning them any friends on the Corporate Court. Wuxing, S-K, Ares, and all of the Japanacorps aren't happy to have another player in the game. Africa has perhaps more untapped resources than any other continent, and it looks like Maersk may be lighting the fire that will set off an explosion of either production or destruction, depending on how the big boys decide to play.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN EXPANSION

Similar to the growth seen around Africa, the islands of Southeast Asia are receiving an influx of Maersk's mobile port facilities. Some of these operations aren't even setting up at populated islands but are instead acting as loading and living facilities for Maersk's people doing 'Jack-knows-what dirtside. I'll admit a lot of speculation and rumors have been flying, and some ridiculous claims have been made, but the important thing is it's creating business for the shadows of Asia, and that's why we really care.

So if you're looking for work outside the regular sprawls and don't mind getting your feet wet, slip on over to Africa or Southeast Asia and toss a rock. You're bound to hit a Johnson with some work for you. Just don't throw too hard.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Maersk is looking to increase their share of the world's shipping business by hitting key pieces of their rivals' shipping concerns, with a little extra edge to their actions with the disrespect the Corporate Court recently showed to them and their fellow AA corps. The moves won't necessarily pay off in the near future, but they can smell blood in the waters of the Corporate Court. Ares is in trouble, NeoNET recently lost their HQ, Horizon is still reeling from the Las Vegas technomancer debacle, and though victorious in the the Az-Am war, Aztechnology is not without its wounds. Maersk wants a few more rivals worrying more about their internal problems than watching Maersk.

This chapter hits on a few of Maersk's top rivals, or more correctly, hits a few of those rivals. There are plenty of other names that a gamemaster can slip in with only a few changes if they want to connect this adventure to their current campaign with a more familiar antagonist.

PLOT POINT 1

PUSHING WUXING

Wuxing Worldwide Shipping is a big operation, usually rolling along in the waves and ports right next to Maersk. They handle a lot of bulk freight, particularly raw materials and components for smaller corporations, especially AAs that don't want to get in too deep with Maersk and risk being folded into their fleet when debts get too large.

This first operation is the most direct of Maersk's plans against their corporate foes. The runners are a single part of a much bigger plan, making the setting for this adventure flexible. Any city with a port can be the home of the runners' target, and a city with multiple ports means the runners could get contracted for multiple pieces.

Mr. Johnson hires the runners at a seedy dockside bar, a little foreshadowing of the work to come. He invites them with a 500-nuyen incentive for each runner to sit down at the table and hear what he has to say.

The job requires precision and stealth on the part of the team. That isn't to say they all have to be super-sneaky types, just that someone needs to be covert at the critical location while the rest of the team can be loud somewhere else. Mr. Johnson will make sure to emphasize this when hiring and negotiating, since it is imperative that this operation stay under the radar. He's offering 50,000 nuyen for the team, with an additional 5,000 nuyen purchasing account for each runner to use through him. He can get any Legal or Restricted piece of equipment worth up to 10,000 nuyen within two days. This is a small clue as to how connected Mr. Johnson is, as he uses Maersk's worldwide shipping resources to skim a little off the top. An Opposed Negotiation Test (Dice Pool 15, Social Limit 7) can increase the payoff by 5,000 nuyen per net hit.

The overall mission is setting up a very controlled release of raw materials into the ocean that is designed to look like an accident. The placement of the explosives is such that they only damage the hull in that particular section of the ship, and the program they are loading is designed to close off that section just before the blasts in order to prevent the ship from sinking. The job is a three-part sabotage of the super-freighter Yuánsù coming into port in two days. The ship will spend four days unloading, refueling, and loading. The general timeline for events is in the **Yuánsù Timeline** sidebar. The first thing the runners need to do is get a copy of the ship's full cargo manifest, including cargo locations. Part two is inserting a program, provided by Mr. Johnson, into the safety and security subsystem of the ship's primary host. Part three will be delivering four satchels of explosives, provided by Mr. Johnson, to specific points in the ship's cargo hold shortly after the runners get him the cargo manifest.

PART ONE

Mr. Johnson wants a complete cargo manifest for the outgoing shipment. The cargo manifest can be found on any of three hosts: Maersk, the dock offices, and the Yuánsù (Maersk host Rating 10, A 10, S 11, D 12, F 13; dock offices host Rating 7, A 8, S 7, D 9, F10; Yuánsù host Rating 8, A 10, S 9, D 8, F11). The timing for this part of the run makes all the difference. The final loca-

tions for cargo are not determined and uploaded until 0400 hours on Day Two. Before this point, the manifest the runners can obtain will only have information on the cargo (tonnage, value, insurance, owner, container number, etc.). This means the runners may have to make extra trips to the docks and get access to the ship's host on several occasions.

PART TWO

Mr. Johnson wants the runners to upload a datafile to the ship's host inside the Safety and Security subsystem. With an Extended Software + Logic [Mental] (12, 30 minutes) Test, the runners could figure out the file is a modification to the ship's emergency ballasting and compartmentalization program. They can't tell exactly what it will do unless they run it or succeed at a separate Extended Software + Logic [Mental] (12, 1 day) Test and a Nautical Mechanic + Logic [Mental] (3) Test. Success means they know the program runs at a specific GPS location out at sea (there's nothing particularly special about the location) and seals off certain parts of the ship while purging sand from the ballasts.

The ship's main host is located in the upper bridge. It logged onto the port's public grid even before the ship made it into dock so the crewmen could start making commcalls.

Ship's Host (Rating 6; A 7, S 6, D 9, F 8; sculpting is a dragonboat with Viking iconography).

PART THREE

Mr. Johnson has the satchels delivered to the runners wherever they want, as soon as they request them. Each satchel is marked with a number in Mandarin that Mr. Johnson will gladly translate for the team. The numbers are to be placed in specific locations. The problem with setting the satchels is that two of them, *yi* and *er* ("one" and "two"), have to be placed before the cargo is loaded. One will be loaded into a vat on the port side of the ship that will be filled with liquid mercury during loading. The other will be at the bottom of a load of powdered steel, a component in ferrocrete. Satchels *san* and *si* ("three" and "four") can't be placed as early, or they'll risk discovery. Satchel san will be placed behind an electrical box on the port side, while satchel si will go under a motor for the hatch cover. Each satchel has a different amount of explosives inside along with other various materials. *Yi* and *er* are mostly explosives, though each has several vials of liquid inside. The vials are specially designed containers filled with fluoroantimonic acid. Breaking one open is a bad idea and would do terrible things, so if your players decide to open one, do terrible things to them. Satchel *san* has several additional pieces of scrap metal, like a homemade frag grenade, but close examination shows the parts to be in good condition and all motor pieces functioning. Satchel *si* has a secondary container with a gas-oil mix. All of the additives are for the cover-up, but let

the players' minds run wild about what they might be doing. It's more about the timing on this job than overcoming the opposition. The entire ship only has two dozen crewmen.

PLOT POINT 2

WAXING PROTEUS

While Wuxing is a shipping rival, the next target threatens to offer first dibs on the next generation of seafaring technology to the highest bidder, which Maersk is not likely to be. In order to make this whole thing work in Maersk's favor, they need three things to occur. The first is access to the newest product in the Proteus catalog, the second is the replacement of the original data with a slightly different file, and the third is for no one to be the wiser. If the runners look into the plans they are stealing, they will see that they describe a special hull coating that reduces friction to almost zero.

Mr. Johnson, the same from the **Pushing Wuxing** plot point, invites the runners to a virtual meet. He could be in their city, or he may not be, but he wants the meet virtual either way. He'll offer a flat 30,000 nuyen for the team to break into a production facility, locate the production line for a specific product, and upload a little file into that production line's dedicated system. He requests the job be done without anyone suspecting the line has been tampered with. He'll offer to pay another 20,000 nuyen in a month if the job goes off as planned. Net hits on an Opposed Negotiation Test (Dice Pool 15, Social Limit 7) result in a 2,500 nuyen increase per net hit for the initial offer. The bonus isn't negotiable.

The catch is that the production facility is located inside a Proteus aquacology. This does not mean the run has to be done near the coast. Proteus has plenty of structures they built as test facilities in lakes, ponds, sloughs, or wetlands that they later convert to other purposes, and this can be one of those. The facility is small, not much larger than a football pitch. It's only accessible by traversing the water, with two dockside entrances front and rear, and an underwater entrance that comes up in a small basement area that is currently flooded, but the pressurization system is still functional and, best of all, not linked to the security system. Finally, and likely most important to the runners, it has a relatively small security force, consisting of three security guards (use Corporate Security, p. 382, *SR5*), a Counter Electronic Infiltration Officer, and a Security Spider (use Ganger Hacker for both, p. 156).

The underwater entrance may well look like the best option, but it could be a catastrophe if a mistake is made. The runners need to follow the pressurization cycle or they'll flood the whole place. Once they swim in, they need to access the locked box next to the door with a Locksmith + Agility [Mental] (3) Test or Strength + Body (6) Test. Inside is a large button that activates the override. Once the button is pressed, the runners need to pump the water out using a large manual pump handle and a Body + Strength (24, 30 seconds) Extended Test. They face Fatigue Damage every 30 seconds, starting at 2S and increasing by 1S with every test. The damage is resisted with Body + Willpower. Even after the room is empty, the pumping needs to continue or the water starts to flow back in quickly (0.5 meters every Combat Turn).

The next step is opening the hatch. It's been closed a while and requires a Strength (3) Test to open. This test can be made with teamwork by up to three characters, though trolls can't be involved in any part of the Teamwork Test; they take up too much room, keeping anyone else from being able to approach the hatch. When the hatch opens, a few centimeters of water flow into the room but are quickly pumped out as long as someone is still pumping. Now the runners all need to get into the hatch, and the pumping runner needs to move in last—and quickly, before the place floods. The gamemaster should pay careful attention to how well and quickly the runners progress to see if they stay ahead of the ever-rising water. Once the last runner is in, the hatch needs to be closed (no test is required).

From there, it's easy to sneak up onto the facility floor and get to the production line they need to access. The problem they might have is wet clothes, or even wet feet. They need to proceed with stealth, and leaving a trail of water from the basement access to the production line will be a big clue something went down.

On the production floor there are no employees, only drone systems. This leaves the security spider and CEIO overworked and playing double-duty. They're not as attentive as they should be; all their Perception Tests face a -4 dice pool modifier.

YUÁNSÙ TIMELINE

Day –2: Runners hired; ship is out at sea.

Day –1: Ship at sea,

Day 0: Ship reaches port around 0300 hours but is not given a dock until 0500 hours. Deck unloading begins at 0600 hours.

Day 1: Deck unloading is complete by 1100 hours. Internal hold unloading begins at 1130 hours. Internal hold unloading is compete at 2330 hours.

Day 2: Refueling begins at 0000 hours and is completed at 0600 hours. Internal hold loading starts at 0630 hours. Internal hold loading is complete at 2330 hours.

Day 3: Deck loading begins at 0000 hours.

Day 4: Deck loading complete at 1500 hours. Final ship check complete and departure around sundown.

PLOT POINT 3

KICKING KOND-ORCHID

When the whole tempo issue rocked the shadows, no one expected Kond-Orchid to make it through. Instead, they've used the connections they formed, the lessons they learned, and the illicit money they squirreled away to maintain their current business and construct an extensive illegal operation. Maersk is interested in bringing these connections to light, but in order to do so they need a series of incidents to attract the attention of the authorities to Kond-Orchid freighters and facilities. The goal is more about generating bad PR than causing serious harm with the disasters at sea.

Mr. Johnson contacts the runners for a meet at an upscale restaurant. He wants to see if they'll show up loaded for bear, or if they can blend into their surroundings, because that's what this job is going to require. He offers the runners 60,000 nuyen to take a cruise. It's not really that easy, of course, but he wants the runners to receive the second half of their instructions once they're on the cruise. He provides tickets attached to Rating 2 commlinks, with Rating 4 fake SINs and appropriate licenses for obvious restricted cyberware. The cruise leaves from Tampa, Florida, CAS, and sails through the Caribbean League with stops in Cancun, Aztlan; Kingston, Jamaica; Port-au-Prince, Haiti; and Havana, Carib League before a long cruise back to Tampa.

On board the cruise ship, the runners get their first set of orders delivered in the form of a message inside a towel folded in the shape of a stingray. The message is simple: "Enjoy yourselves." There's a series of prepaid activities and an open expense account for the ship. This is a chance to live a little of the regular life (actually, a better-than-average life). The activities occur in Cancun, where runners can get in trouble if they try to leave the resort city and get into Aztlan proper, and Kingston, where runners can get mugged if they leave the safe area around the port.

After they leave Kingston, the runners receive another towel origami message, this one in the shape of a flower—an orchid, to be specific. The critical info is on a datachip.

The visit to Haiti is not as fun as the rest of the cruise. Mr. Johnson wants the runners to use their shore time to get on board three Kond-Orchid freighters in the port and install an agent program onto the ships' hosts. He doesn't give any specific instructions on where in the host system the program should be installed; it simply needs to be uploaded.

The three ships are all docked next to each other in the same secured section of the port. The area has two guards (use Corporate Security, p. 382, *SR5*) at each of the four gates leading into the area, and three patrols with four guards each that walk the dock area. The runners may also run across any of the thirty workers who are on duty during the day while they are ashore. The last bits of trouble in the area are four members of the Olaya cartel (use Organized Crime Gang, p. 383, *SR5*) there to keep an eye on some product that is being shipped through K-O.

On board the freighters, the runners only have to avoid five crew members who are currently focused on the loading process and not security. They'll question anyone who looks out of place but won't raise an alarm unless they see something threatening going on. These guys deal with organized crime and military types all the time and won't be surprised by armed men on the ship.

When the runners upload the agent, it immediately utilizes an onboard Wrapper program to disguise itself as a resident persona (a 17th-century swashbuckler) and go about normal activities. The runners just have to sneak between ships and get back to the cruise ship before it leaves port.

TIME FRAME

The cruise ship will come into port at 0430 hours but won't let guests disembark until 0730 hours. The runners could try to sneak off the ship, or they could just wait for the proper time. The ship requests all passengers return by 1930 hours, and the ship will sail at 2000 hours. This leaves the runners between twelve and fifteen hours to get the job done.

PLOT POINT 4

SMACKING S-K

When trying to interfere in the operations of Saeder-Krupp, the first thing that needs to be done is to convince the runners that they aren't working against Saeder-Krupp, because working against a dragon is about as appealing as making a deal with one. Maersk is running a double op on this, so the pay comes in a little low, but the runners have some hacking guardian angels watching over their shoulders. The hackers have altered the ship IDs of a dozen S-K subsidiary vessels with IDs from Maersk ships as well as several other systems on the dock to create the electronic illusion of a Maersk dock. The hackers will be tied up controlling the Matrix and will gently nudge the team's hacker(s) off the local host. The illusion will only last through the first half of the run. The runners will be mid-operation when the technical illusion drops, and at that point a decision needs to be made: keep to the plan or cross the line of working against a dragon.

Mr. Johnson, the same from the previous operations, reaches out for an easy job. The meet is at an Irish pub near the docks. This is a classic meet in the back room. The job is big in scope but, according to Mr. Johnson, not in difficulty. He wants a specific agent program, which he will supply, loaded onto the primary host of all twelve of the ships in port (they have Rating 6 hosts, A 6, S 7, D 8, F 9). The pay is 1,000 nuyen for each ship, with an 18,000 nuyen bonus if they get all of them. Negotiations can get the per-ship amount up to 2,000 nuyen with 2 net hits, but the overall bonus then shrinks accordingly so that the total payout is 30,000 nuyen. At 3 net hits the per-ship amount goes to 2,000 nuyen, while the 18,000 nuyen bonus remains unchanged, at 4 net hits the bonus rises to 23,000 nuyen, and at 5 net hits the bonus rises to 28,000 nuyen, making the whole thing worth 52,000 nuyen.

At the docks, there are clues that this isn't really a Maersk dock or Maersk vessels. The three biggest clues are the types of ships, the local security in place instead of Tyr Inc. (Maersk's security interest), and the Matrix sculpting of the ships' hosts. Appropriate Knowledge skill + Logic [Mental] Tests could get the runners clues if they're suspicious. With 2 hits, they know Maersk usually uses Maersk-built vessels, and none of the ships at the dock are Maersk builds. They also realize Maersk iconography usually contains pieces of Norse mythology, but the ships here have a utilitarian iconography. With 4 hits, they know Maersk usually uses their own security company on their private docks, and the presence of a local outfit seems strange. Then they recall (with sudden dread) that Saeder-Krupp uses a utilitarian iconography in their ship systems.

There are four different classes/styles of ship currently docked, including a humongous superfreighter, regular freighters, oil tankers, and barges. There's only one superfreighter (400m x 59m), seven standard freighters (300m x 35m), two oil tankers (245m x 34m), and two barges (60m x 10m). Each ship's bridge is different, but they are all accessible without going inside the ship by instead using the stairs and deck.

Since all of the ships are S-K subsidiary vessels they won't have S-K logos all over, but again, Knowledge Skills can come in handy. With 2 hits on the appropriate Knowledge Skill roll, the runners realize this company is not a subsidiary of Maersk; with 4 hits, they realize

the company is a subsidiary of S-K. Even if the runners don't realize it, the hackers will be chased off by GOD while the runners are between the sixth and seventh boat. This is when they need to decide if working against Saeder-Krupp is something they want to continue doing. They might even decide it best to go remove the programs already in place. They have enough time to do one or the other (running takes no time at all) before security teams (use Corporate Security, p. 382, *SR5*) start to sweep through the ships because of the hack.

Each time the runners load the agent, it changes to look like a standard persona for the host and goes about doing work. The agents are programmed to stay dormant until they are needed.

PLOT POINT 5

DEALING WITH A DRAGON

While the last mission was focused on avoiding the attention of a dragon, this operation puts the runners at sea and in contact with one—the Sea Dragon.

Mr. Johnson hires the runners as security for a Maersk freighter with some unique cargo. He's developed a decent trust for the team as long as they've done well thus far, or he's willing to give them another shot if they haven't (timeliness is important, and he may not be eager to put together a new team). He sends the run invite out as a message that says, "Pack for a two-week assignment, security gig, out of country, no luggage restrictions. Meet at dock 57, Majestic. Mr. Johnson."

The meet site is a Maersk freighter named Majestic. The freighter can be in any Pacific port city. The trip the ship takes will be trans-Pacific, direction doesn't matter. Mr. Johnson is standing near the bottom of a lift that leads to a walkway over to the ship. He has two guards with him, both in Tyr Inc. uniforms. As long as the runners aren't walking up with obvious weapons there isn't any trouble. If they are packing obvious hardware, Mr. Johnson points to a set of large open crates nearby. He tells them the weapons will be available onboard, but they really can't be seen walking onto the ship with that kind of hardware.

Mr. Johnson offers the team 60,000 nuyen for a two-week assignment. Standard negotiations increase the pay by 5,000 nuyen per net hit up to 100,000 nuyen. They are to act as security for some specific cargo. He won't tell them what the cargo is, only that it fits in a container they need to keep safe. He also does not reveal the destination. The runners are simply to keep the cargo container protected until they are ordered by the captain to escort it to the deck. They will not be responsible for the cargo at its destination.

The job has three complications for the runners to deal with during the course of the first week of the trip: an attack by pirates, a saboteur onboard who threatens to halt the ship, and a pack of barghests that escape their cages. Once the runners have dealt with all three problems, the trip is quiet until they are called to the deck for the final scene at the two-week point.

PIRATES

Large cargo ships are a pirate's dream, since they have such small crews and usually have a wide variety of valuables for them to pick and choose from. Or they can just steal the whole lot. The pirates attack the ship under cover of darkness at 0200 hours. They have small boats that approach from both sides with six pirates (use Pirates, p. 158) each. They toss grappling hooks over the rails and then climb up. They quietly move to the bridge, where they take the current commander hostage and have him order the ship to stop. After that the pirate's larger ship approaches and ties off on the freighter. The rest of the pirates board, assess the ship, and decide this one is worth stealing completely. Their intention is to kill the crew and take the ship. The runners, though, might be the fly in that particular ointment.

If the runners are on deck, they may spot the approaching pirates. If they are all below, the first sign of trouble comes when the ship slows and stops. Clue two will be the order from the commander for all crew to lock down in quarters. A runner with seafaring experience (appropriate Knowledge Skill or Pilot Watercraft) may know this is a standard procedure if they are boarded by pirates. The runners will have ten minutes before the larger pirate vessel arrives. There are twelve pirates on board the Majestic and another fourteen on the pirates' ship.

SABOTEUR

As with the pirate attack, this section begins with the ship slowing but not stopping. A saboteur has disabled one of the engines and forced the ship to slow to half speed. If the runners are curious they may go ask the captain, or if they wait a few hours the captain comes to them. The captain explains the situation and asks for help finding the saboteur. He offers a list of the ship's personnel; the runners can investigate all of them, though the captain requests the questioning stay polite.

Investigating the crew will get no results; the saboteur is a stowaway living in one of the cargo containers. He's a runner hired by Hans Brackhaus of Saeder-Krupp to slow this ship and prevent it from reaching its destination on time. He only sneaks out to do specific jobs. His first was sabotaging the ship's guidance systems. They were sailing off-course for about two hours before the system autocorrected itself. The second job resulted in damage to one of the engines. Since it didn't stop the ship completely, the saboteur needs to go after the other one about twelve hours after the first. In the meantime, he unleashes the hounds (see below) as a distraction.

BARGHESTS

The saboteur has a distraction handy that he can use at any time; he may trigger it before his second run, or it may happen after his death or capture. He has a small explosive charge set to detonate every twenty-four hours at 0430 hours; he has been resetting it, so it has not gone off yet. Once he's taken out it can automatically go off, or he can use it to distract or tie up the runners while he sabotages an engine. The charge releases a pack of four barghests (p. 403, *SR5*) being transported for security training. The barghests won't attack immediately and will instead start stalking about for food. After they've cleared out all the rats (a few carcasses can be clues for the runners), they get hungry and look for larger prey.

DRAGON

After a week passes, the runners get the call from the captain telling them to gear up and secure the deck. When they reach the deck they are in the middle of the Pacific with no land in sight. The ship's crane is straining to haul the container up from the hold, and a spot has been cleared along the port side, including the removal of several pieces of railing.

As the crane sets the container down, a small crack appears in the corner and liquid starts to leak. The captain pulls a large pearl earring from his pocket and pokes it through his unpierced ear. A small trickle of blood runs down as he quietly speaks "We are here." The earring glows on the astral as some kind of focus. The captain nods as if he hears something, and then gives an order to open the container.

The container door bursts with a pop, and a cascade of water concealing a blurry form erupts and crashes into the sea. In the distance a form rises from the water, and the runners get a glimpse of what could only be the Sea Dragon. A minute later the dragon slips back below the waves and the runners see another form of dragon—an Ares Dragon helicopter—flying toward the Majestic.

As the 'copter approaches, the container is dropped back into the hold, and the runners are directed to the helipad. The helicopter will take them to the nation of Hawai'i, where Mr. Johnson has arranged a flight back home after they enjoy a little vacation.

ROCKS OFF

C-K News 1/Associated Press
Houston—February 14, 2077

DISGRUNTLED EMPLOYEE MURDERS BOSS, COWORKERS

Earlier this morning an unidentified gunman opened fire at Dyson Global Geodynamics, a local mining exploration company, killing fourteen people and injuring six others before turning the gun on himself. The shooter reportedly had been fired from Dyson Global Geodynamics the previous week.

Among the confirmed dead are Dyson Global Geodynamics president Mia Rosencrantz and Chief of Operations Lawrence Ku. The shooter reportedly entered through the lobby armed with an AK-98 along with several grenades and a small pistol. He began shooting in the lobby and moved to the seventeenth floor where board meeting was being held. The shooter targeted the board meeting, killing or wounding everyone present.

Dyson Global Geodynamics security managed to seal off the floor, trapping the shooter. Once Lone Star arrived on scene, the shooter turned his weapon on himself, ending the standoff.

A RUSSIAN BUSINESS BOOM

POSTED BY: MR. BONDS

The Russian government is still for sale. We all know about the ridiculous amounts of nuyen that changed hands when Evo decided to move there years ago and quickly got favorable concession after favorable concession. The money and favors thrown their way only reinforced the notion that Russia is a buyer's market. Other corporations took note of how the benefits Evo received by working over the government, and they have looked for different pieces of the government that they can proudly own. One area in particular into which A and AA companies have been moving is the dangerous but potentially rewarding mining industry.

The risks involved with doing business in Russia are significant. Russia was not built to support extraterritoriality or even private corporations. A great deal of paperwork exists to file any petition for drilling rights or land ownership as a foreign citizen. Moreover, the ubiquitous corruption means greasing palms every step of the way. It doesn't make much of a difference if you are acting as a foreign national or a Russian citizen. In some cases, being a citizen can make things worse, as the government can snatch the land back from a private citizen claiming national interest.

> The risks aren't only financial. If you're going to work in Russia you wind up having to deal with greedy oligarchs, corrupt officials and police, and of course, the Vory.
> Kay St. Irregular

> Don't forget about the Yakuza. Over the past two decades the Yakuza have made inroads into most major Russian cities. It is still a Vory-run underworld, but the Yakuza are chipping away, especially in the eastern section of the nation.
> Mihoshi Oni

> Why would Evo and other AAA interests in the area allow these smaller companies to basically run amok in their backyard?
> Baka Dabora

> Simple answer: because no matter who lays claim to a huge mineral deposit, they are going to need an Evo or a Saeder-Krupp to get material from the ground to market. This becomes a windfall for the megas, because they can name their price providing heavy machinery and the more specialized refining equipment required for distilling precious minerals. So, even if a company like Maersk is making a few billion dollars on Russian minerals, someone bigger is getting a cut getting it to market with hardly any financial risk.
> Kia

> And for those smaller companies who aren't willing to play ball, we have the newly announced megacoroprate audit.
> Dr. Spin

The risk outweighs the rewards for most, but every so often a company will take that risk and stumble on to a major find that catapults them up the corporate ranking. Eight years ago Rulon Metals struck an orichalcum deposit near Irktusk and went from a nobody French operation to an top-rated mining conglomerate that eventually sold to Wuxing for a price tag in the high billions.

One essential thing to remember about mining is the entire logistical flow of raw materials to the market. Successful mining is about more than just removing materials from the ground—it involves making sure those materials can smoothly get to places where they can earn the most revenue. There are a number of touchpoints and possible vulnerabilities in any logistical chain, which is great news for us, because if people want to interfere with a process, they call us. The more corps jockey over who's going to dig what out of the ground, the more work there is for us.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

One year ago a geologist named Anatoly Zayetsev was contracted by Dyson Global Geodynamics Vice President of Operations Darius Lang to search Russia for orichalcum deposits. While he failed to come up with orichalcum, Zayetsev uncovered a massive rare earth elements find. He returned to DGG with news of his find and offered to share the claim with the corporation. Lang agreed to help him with the claim, but secretly hired a witch doctor who specialized in manipulating the behavior of others, including making them behave erratically or insanely. The witch doctor got the job done, and after a few days Zayetsev entered corporate headquarters under the influence of magic. He was armed and walked directly into a board meeting, killing everyone he encountered. He died at the scene, supposedly by his own hand, but really at the command of the controlling spellcaster. Lang then stepped into the power void, gaining some extra strength when he unveiled the discovery of the rare earth elements. The deposit contained at least twenty-five tons with a price tag in the billions. Lang was named CEO a month after the massacre.

With that maneuvering out of the way, Dyson Global Geodynamics is on the verge of filing a new materials claim on the deposit, which is just outside of Vladivostok. As is the way in the mining business, other interested parties want to know what and where the claim is before it can be filed. At the same time, Dyson is seeking out a relationship with both the Vory and the local Yakuza to ensure that once the claim is filed, they'll be protected.

One of the other interested parties initiates contact with the runners. A Mr. Johnson from Chalmers and Cole discovers that the original claim being filed by DGG originally belonged Anatoly Zayetsev. Working with his widow, they've begun Corporate Court proceedings to file their own claim. Unfortunately, Chalmers and Cole have no idea where the RAE deposit actually is. Discovering that Dyson is headed to Russia to finish filing the claim, they hire the runners to secretly be their eyes and ears while officially working for Dyson Global as security on their trip to Vladivostok. The players have two goals. They are expected to gather specifics of the deal and the location of the claim itself. They are asked to do whatever they can to subtly sabotage the process, slowing it down enough that Mr. Johnson can help the widow argue her rights to the find—while also making Dyson seem incompetent and unable to deal with such a significant find.

PLOT POINT 1

OF GRIEVING WIDOWS AND INTERESTED PARTIES

The runners are contacted by their fixer and told there is a job opportunity that is a bit off the beaten path. They are told to meet at a private airstrip where they are ushered into a waiting plane and flown to Houston to sit down with the client. The meeting takes place at the airstrip where they land. The plane is moved into a private hangar, and when they exit the aircraft the runners are escorted to an office inside the hangar.

In the office is a man dressed in an expensive suit who introduces himself as Mr. Johnson (use Mr. Johnson (Corporate), p. 157). He claims that he works for a very private organization that has need of a team of runners who can "exhibit extraordinary discretion in a sensitive

matter." He explains that Dyson Global Geodynamics is looking for a team of security professionals to accompany their CEO to Russia on a business trip. Mr. Johnson explains that he can convince DGG that the runners are the talent they are looking for.

Their real job, though, will be to gather information about a mining operation being planned by DGG. Mr. Johnson tells the runners that a geologist named Anatoly Zayetsev recently located a deposit of rare earth elements outside of Vladivostok, Russia. He admits that Zayetsev was working under contract to DGG when he found the deposit, but he says DGG has not lived up to all of their promises in that contract, meaning Zayetsev was under no obligation to turn the claim over to the megacorporation.

Zayetsev recently passed away—the victim of an "unfortunate incident," Mr. Johnson says—and his widow, Inessa, inherited everything, including the rare elements find. DGG is trying to take the claim for themselves, though, and Mr. Johnson says they must be stopped. If the runners can gather information on how DGG is proceeding, Mr. Johnson will use it to make things right.

The runners are offered 5,000 nuyen per runner for the job, along with a clothing allowance of 1,000 nuyen apiece to help them look the part. Mr. Johnson says this may not seem high, but it will be in addition to pay the runners are earning as bodyguards, so they actually stand to earn a lot. The pay can be increased by 500 nuyen per net hit on a Negotiation + Charisma Opposed Test, up to a maximum of 7,500 per runner.

If the runners accept the job, they are to report to DGG Vice President of Operations Darius Lang.

PLOT POINT 2

THE OTHER MR. JOHNSON

Chalmers and Cole arranged for a local contractor to recommend the runners to Mr. Lang and his associates. The runners are expected to arrive at 3 p.m. in the afternoon. The meeting takes place near the DGG corporate offices in a temporary office space generally reserved for small-scale businesses and seasonal setups that need a formal place to meet. Lang has rented out the entire floor to ensure the meeting is discreet. Earl Griffen, head of DGG security, requested to be present at the meeting. His background check of the runners yielded little information, so he wants to see the team that will be chaperoning his corporate leader.

Lang is a tall wiry elf with blonde hair showing unnatural streaks of gray. He speaks with a slow resonant drawl indicative of his southern upbringing. He is direct with the runners. He explains that he wanted shadowrunners along on this trip because he knows he is going to need to climb down into the muck of the Vladivostok underworld. He needs to know he brought someone along with experience dealing with these kind of people. Griffen adds that he is concerned about other corporate interests, such as Proteus and Maersk, taking advantage of his CEO being so exposed.

Lang is prepared to offer the runners 1,500 nuyen per person per day to serve as his security detail. Due to the fact that they will be traveling internationally, they will not be allowed to take their own weapons with them. Lang has arranged for a supplier at the other end to provide the runners with small arms and concealable holsters. They can make requests for what type of pistols they will be carrying, but it has to be in the Pistol class of weapons.

PLOT POINT 3

TO RUSSIA WITH LOVE

In this stage, the players make the journey to Russia. They are traveling with a well-resourced corporation, which means they will be going business class, with all the security that entails. That includes Rating 5 MAD scanners, capable security spiders, and a mage performing astral overwatch behind an elevated window. In the runners try to sneak through any weapons, these are the forces they will have to deal with. They can't count on their new employers backing them up if they get caught, as Lang and his associates will figure if the runners were stupid enough to ignore the first instructions they got, they probably are not worth saving.

The flight to Russia proceeds uneventfully, and the runners' group disembarks in Vladivostok. The hotel from which Lang will be basing his operations is five kilometers from the airport, so they have a short jaunt ahead of them. Once they meet the car, the pistols the runners requested will be in the trunk—Lang is not cruel enough to make shadowrunners go too long on the ground without being armed.

On the drive, the runners can attempt a Perception + Intuition (4) Test to notice a tan sedan following them from the airport to the hotel. The sedan is nondescript, and the driver is subtle, meaning the tail job is tough to notice. The lack of a physical license plate doesn't help anything, and the electronic license is encrypted so that only law enforcement can see it (treat this encryption as giving the car's electronic systems a Firewall rating of 9). There is a small dent on the passenger side of the front bumper that serves as a distinguishing mark.

At the hotel, the runners are not given a whole lot of time to sit around and raid the mini-fridge. Lang wants them suited up, armed, and ready to go in fifteen minutes.

PLOT POINT 4

YOU'RE NEVER TRULY ALONE

Once fifteen minutes passes, Lang gives the runners their briefing. He has a meeting to attend, and it's a meeting that he and the people he is meeting with should know about—and no one else. The runners' job is to make sure no outsiders witness the meeting taking place, and then to ensure the meeting stays privateer while it is happening. The meeting is with a Vory official in a Vory bar, but Lang does not volunteer this knowledge (though he tells the runners the name of the bar, which is the Behemoth. Once they know about the destination, runners may make a Vladivostok Streets + Intuition (4) Test to know that their destination is a Vory hangout.

Whether they recognize the location or not, the runners should understand that part of their spying job is to learn what's happening at this meeting, so they should make a plan to perform some espionage.

The same tan sedan that tailed them from the airport follows them again. If the runners did not spot it before, it takes a Perception + Intuition (4) Test to notice it; if they did, it's only a Perception + Intuition (2) Test. If they are not driving and inform Lang about the tail, Lang tells his driver to shake the tail, and the driver pulls it off. If one of the runners is behind the wheel, it takes a Pilot Ground Craft + Reaction (3) Test to shake the tail.

If the runners don't notice the tail, the sedan will see where they are going, then peel away and report back. This complication will bite the runners in the hoop later on.

Shaking the tail is the only bit of bodyguard work the runners have to pull off at this point, so once they are at the Behemoth, their main job is to listen to the conversation Lang is having with Elizaveta Bolshov, a sovetnik with the Vladivostok Vory. Lang is looking for protection from Bolshov in the course of the mining operations, as well as the negotiations leading up to it. In return, the Vory will receive 0.1 percent of the gross proceeds of the mining operations—the percent doesn't sound like much, but with the money the mine is expected to bring in, that figure is likely to be in the millions. They move to a back room for their conversation shield their conversation with a Rating 5 area jammer. If the runners open the door to the office while the meeting is taking place, they'll be waved off. If they refuse to leave, Bolshov will inform them that they are surrounded by her people. And they really should pay attention. Suffice it to say, the runners' eavesdropping should not be obvious.

PLOT POINT 5

FRIDAY NIGHT LIFE

In the evening the runners are expected to keep an eye on Lang while he enjoys a slice of Vladivostok night-

life. He specifically emphasizes keeping his commlink safe—the runners are not to let anyone lift it or hack into it. Normally he carefully monitors it, but he expects to be distracted and at least a bit incapacitated before the evening is over. If runners ask, he is willing to offer marks to them so they can defend the commlink.

Lang goes out to some trendy clubs, engages in a little drinking and dancing, then starts looking for some company for the evening. At some in his activities, Lang should run into some trouble. Perhaps he drinks a little too much and gets into a pissing contest with some local tough guys. Maybe he solicits a prostitute, which normally wouldn't be much of a big deal, except Lang forgot to bribe the local police first, and they are not pleased about him skipping that step. Whatever the case may be, at some point Lang runs afoul of the local politsiya—the police (use Police Patrols stats, p. 383, *SR5*. The easiest way to take care of the matter is a simple 200 nuyen bribe to the officers, though the runners also need an Etiquette + Charisma vs. Lang's Perception + Charisma Opposed Test to convince him not to mouth off to the officers, thus doubling the required bribe. If the runners decide against the bribe, Lang will be stuck in jail until Monday morning and will miss his Saturday afternoon meeting with the Federal Agency for Natural Resources agent. That's good for Chalmers and Cole, but not for Lang; if that happens, he will fire the runners, but Chalmers and Cole will pay them half the agreed-upon amount. They are happy that Lang missed his meeting, but they still don't have all the intelligence they wanted about his efforts.

An attempted hack on the commlink will come in while Lang is dealing with the politsiya, waged by a hacker with a Hack on the Fly dice pool of 10. If left to his own devices, Lang's commlink (a Transys Avalon, Device Rating 6) will be combined with his Intuition, which his drinking he temporarily lowered to 3. If the runners got marks in the commlink, they can use their Intuition in the defense.

If the hack is successful, Lang will dock the runners a day's pay. If the runners use the opportunity to poke into Lang's files, they'll discover evidence of Lang enlisting the Vory for protection, as well as a planned cash transfer to a representative from the Russian Agency for Natural Resources. It should not be difficult to figure out that this is a bribe. They'll also see the exact coordinates of the RAE find and details on how to excavate it.

If the runners try to edit or copy any files on the commlink and fail at any Edit File tests, they leave evidence of their activities that Lang discovers in the morning, when he sobers up. He then fires them immediately.

PLOT POINT 6

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

The main business of the next day is a visit to the government. The government office district is a picturesque setting reminiscent of Cold War spy dramas. While the Cold War is long over, there is still plenty of espionage happening, and it seems like everyone in this section of the city has an ulterior motive. Government spies have ceded some space to their corporate counterparts, and many of the battles of old moved from the war room to the boardroom.

This visit happens on a Saturday morning, and most of the government buildings are closed. The streets are lined with international tourists snapping digital images for loved ones back home.

Lang and his assistant are here to meet with a representative of the federal Agency for Natural Resources, or Minprirody. A Saturday morning meeting is out of character for Russian officials, but some meeting are best held when the office is empty and no witnesses are around. The runners' role in this meeting is fairly simple: observe and protect. Nothing dangerous happens during the meeting, but it does give the runner's an opportunity to gather more evidence for Chalmers and Cole. Surreptitious photo snaps help—any runners with cybereyes should be able to record a nice amount of useful data.

If Lang went to jail after his nighttime adventures, this meeting takes place on a Monday morning away from the office. Lang meets with the federal agent for breakfast at an upscale restaurant called Pumpernickel. The runners are expected to dress upscale, most likely using the clothes Chalmers and Cole provided for them. If properly dressed, they will be seated close to Lang's table; otherwise they will be asked to wait outside. A pair of Maersk spies is inside the restaurant trying to eavesdrop on the meeting. A successful Perception + Intuition (5) Test will reveal the intrusion.

If the spies are detained and questioned they will admit they work for Maersk and have had Lang under surveillance since he arrived in Russia. They expect to be released as a professional courtesy. The runners are left with three choices at this point: find some way to detain the spies, let them go, or eliminate them. Any choice other than letting them go will draw more Maersk agents. If the runners decide to let the spies go, Maersk will simply continue surveillance, and the spies will owe the runners a favor.

PLOT POINT 7

(UN)OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Later in the day after the government meeting, Lang takes a trips to the docks for another meeting. Again, he emphasizes that no one can know about this meeting, and the runners need to secure the area. This will be tricky, because instead of meeting in a bar packed with Vory thugs, this meeting is taking place in the office of a dock warehouse. The building will be larger and less populated, making it a little more difficult to secure. The good mews is that unlike the bar, the warehouse is not associated with any particular group in the public's mind.

The meeting is with a Yakuza shategashira who is in charge of the Yakuza's interests in the docks and can help DGG move out the RAEs once mining begins. Lang wants to make sure things go as smoothly as possible, but there's a hitch—the Yakuza and the Vory don't get along at all, and if either side found out Lang was making agreements with the other, they would pull out of the deal—and maybe take one of Lang's thumbs for fun.

As with the meeting at the Vory bar, Lang uses a Rating 5 area jammer for privacy. The meeting goes smoothly for about half an hour until a street gang who prowls the docks decides that maybe this warehouse is abandoned and they should loot it. When they see traces of life, they decide that maybe they should beat the holy living hell out of whoever is here.

There are ten gang members (use Gangers & Street Scum, p. 382, *SR5*). The trick is not just fending them off, but making sure no one gets a look at Lang and the shategashira together and then survives to spread the story. The gang is a particular problem as they recognize the shategashira as a Yakuza man, so they'd be effective in telling stories about who Lang was meeting with (they don't know who Lang is, of course, but they could describe him, which could cause him problems). The point being, no one can be allowed to see Lang and the shategashira together and live.

PLOT POINT 8

AN INCONVENIENT ACCIDENT

In this scene, Lang's car is targeted for a crash. A Hyundai Shin-Hyung comes on an intercept course, looking to tag the back bumper of Lang's car and take it out of action. The driver of the Shin-Hyung (use Drone Rigger, p. 124, *SR5*) doesn't want to kill Lang, so if it looks like she's about to go into a full-on crash, she'll pull out. She wants the car disabled and Lang able to talk. Treat her actions as an attempted Ram (p. 203, *SR5*).

If she is able to disable the vehicle, the rigger comes over to tell Lang that this was just a taste of what is in store for him, and he can end it right here by turning over his commlink. Lang will not, of course, agree to this, and will expect his bodyguards to take care of this assault.

The runners can try to use persuasive powers with the rigger. She is an in-house Maersk asset and loyal to her company, and it will take a significant bribe of 10,000 nuyen for her to go away without the commlink. Information, though, is worth more than money. If the runners agree to share information about what is on the commlink with her, she will leave peacefully. As a bonus, she will warn them about the planned ambush that happens in Plot Point 10.

The runners can always just kill her, but that will cost them the chance to learn about the ambush.

PLOT POINT 9

HOME AGAIN

The rest of the day is taken up with meetings with DGG staff, then a quiet night at the hotel. The next morning, it's time to return to the airport to go back home.

Maersk, however, is not pleased to have not heard from Lang about the information they want, so they get a little more aggressive. Overnight they set up a construction zone in the route between the hotel and airport, and the ambush is set up on the detour cars are forced into. If the runners shared information with the Maersk agent in Plot Point 9, they get a text message on their way to the airport telling them what's going down. If not, it will come as a surprise to them.

The detour takes the runners to a two-lane road. After the runners pull on to it, a car going the opposite direction swerves into their lane, forcing them to the right. There is a construction crew of six people at that point—or at least that is how they are dressed. In reality, they are a Maersk security crew sent to beat Lang and the shadowrunners down (use Security Grunts, p. 159). While the rigger in Plot Point 9 wanted to leave Lang alive, this crew has no such compunction. If Lang dies, they figure, it's his fault.

There isn't any real negotiation to be done here, as the Maersk crew is single-minded. The runners' job is to fight them off.

Once they fight off the ambush, the runners can make their way to the airport without further interference.

PLOT POINT 10

SETTLING UP

Once they land, Lang thanks the runners and bids them good day. They should have been paid at the start of every day, so Lang should not owe them anything.

The runners can then make arrangements with their original Mr. Johnson to collect their payment. To be paid in full, Mr. Johnson needs the following information:

- Lang is working with the Vory for security.
- Lang is bribing government officials to expedite the mining process.
- Lang is working with the Yakuza to get the docks running smoothly for him.
- Maersk is interested in the claim Lang has.

The runners' payment is reduced by 1,000 nuyen per person for each piece of information they don't have (Mr. Johnson doesn't know what he's missing, of course, but he says the runners' information feels incomplete and not worth the full payment). Mr. Johnson now has some information to use in his campaign to control the mining rights—it's his job to figure out how to use it.

STOKING THE FLAMES

SEATTLE, JANUARY 3, 2077

TTreadle sauntered into Infinity with two goals in mind: first, to not be distracted by all the attention-grabbing AROs, the flashy optical illusions, the pulsating colored lights, and the bleeding-edge holograms that flooded the nightclub to draw in hundreds of Seattle clubbers to spend their hard-earned nuyen; and second, to find work. Her last job with her regular crew went sideways, and most of her chummers would have to hang around Seattle while they recovered from their injuries. They wouldn't be up to running for at least a couple more weeks. For Treadle, that was far too long to stay idle. She needed nuyen. Fortunately, after she asked around on JackPoint, Slamm-0! managed to put her in touch with a smuggler in need of muscle for an upcoming job.

As instructed, she asked one of the bartenders where she could find "Phantom." The man stared at her for a minute, comparing her obvious ork features to whatever description he'd been given, then nodded and point her to a private room labeled the "orange" suite. She wasn't sure what the color meant, nor did she care.

When she approached the suite, the door sensors scanned her face and her commlink, read her fake SIN, and finally authorized her entry. The door slid open. Inside, Treadle found a human in his late forties drinking a top-shelf alcoholic drink and watching a Seahawks playoff game. He wore a plain black T-shirt, camouflage pants, and a worn armored jacket.

"Ah, you must be Treadle. Welcome, chummer. Slamm-0! speaks highly of you," Phantom said, standing up. He extended his hand for a handshake, which she accepted. Her rough hand was bigger than his smooth one. "I also hear you had a bit of bad luck on your last job."

"Yeah. The people we ran against took their jobs way too seriously. We were fortunate to get away without losing anyone. But the way things went down has put me in a tight spot for money. So here I am."

"I can understand being in tight spots. I'm kind of in the middle of one right now. But I'm not hiring you for anything until I ask some questions."

Treadle sat down in one of the chairs next to the smuggler. Phantom waited until the suite door slid closed again before continuing.

"Putting aside Slamm-0!'s referral, which is a great thing going in your favor, who have you worked with who might vouch for your street cred? You seem like someone who can handle yourself, but I need to know more about your character. I've been burned before—by runners who tried to rip me off, or rip off my clients, or sell me out to the law, or use BTL on the job. Things like that make me look bad. I don't want that to happen again."

"You can check my history with Blacktail, my fixer in the SSC. Here's his commcode. He'll tell you that I've done twelve jobs for him, and out of those twelve, we've gotten the job done every time. They haven't always been pretty, but it doesn't really matter as long as the job gets done. Also, so you know, my crew and I don't just do work in Seattle. We also work in Vancouver, Bellingham, Vegas, and even as far south as Los Angeles from time to time. You can check all the jurisdictions if you want for my street name. I'm not currently wanted in any of them. As for the way I carry myself on a job, I'm always professional. I have no addictions, nor do I have any intention of ripping your clients off. I pride myself on my dependability."

"I will indeed check my sources for any rap sheets on you, and see if your story carries weight. Also, I like that you've worked in multiple sprawls. It shows you have experience evading border patrols, and slipping in and out of countries with ease. You would be surprised how many runners I've met this evening who haven't done any running outside of Seattle. So as you might expect, I'm a little leery relying on them to help me."

"We're set up so we can generally get ourselves across borders without too much trouble ... if we're not trying to do what you do for a living. So if you need me, you won't need to help me cross over any borders where you need me to go. I'll do it on my own."

"I see," Phantom said, sounding pleased. "So tell me about yourself. What else should I know that could convince me to hire you? Instead of some random street sam?"

"Well, I'm an adept. My magic makes me quick and agile; so I can shoot faster and more accurately than most. I can strengthen my body to resist injury, so I can stay on my feet longer. I can sense vulnerabilities, even

target specific nerve clusters to cripple an opponent." Holding up her fists, Treadle summoned electricity around them. Sparks arced visibly across her knuckles. "And I'm a living stun baton."

"I'm impressed," Phantom said. "Let me make a few phone calls. This should only take ten minutes, if you're on the level with me. And if everything works out, I can definitely use someone with your talent."

The human stood up and walked out the back door, the one normally reserved for Mr. Johnson.

Treadle waited patiently, knowing what he would find. He would find no rap sheets for her, and nothing but compliments from her previous clients. In theory, she should have no trouble getting this job. But at the same time, her crew's last job, in theory, should have been a milk run.

So anything could happen.

Minutes passed before Phantom walked back into the private suite. "Well, Treadle, it looks like everything checks out. Blacktail verified your work history, and my sources couldn't find you listed in any warrants in any nearby jurisdictions. So, based on that I have a job in the Northern Crescent region that I need muscle for. It pays 2,500 nuyen for approximately 48 hours of work. Would you be interested?"

"I would."

"Good. Here's what you need to know ..."

OVERVIEW

In 2074, tensions flared again between the homesteaders of California's Northern Crescent region and the Tír military in their longstanding conflict over who should control that territory. Much of that conflict was instigated by forces within the Great Dragon Civil War, using the homesteaders and the Tír military as chess pieces against the great dragon Hestaby. But those forces only brought to the surface simmering tensions; between the Tír government's desire to finally complete their plans to annex the Northern Crescent region, and the homesteaders' desire to remain free from the Tír government's rule, and to maintain their rights over their own property, and to not have their property summarily stripped from them by a foreign government. Things have only deteriorated since Hestaby's departure from Mount Shasta, as the Tír government feels it now has the freedom to finally annex the Northern Crescent region of California, while the homesteaders are feeling ever more desperate in their need to find something that will keep the Tír military at bay. Both sides are looking for an edge in that conflict, and they are turning toward Ares for that edge.

Since the war between Aztlan and Amazonia, people in the shadows have talked about how Ares interfered by selling heavy weapons to both sides—the native Aztlaner population as well as the Amazonian guerrilla fighters—profiting greatly from the death and destruction while prolonging the conflict. Rumors persist that Ares continues to supply weapons to insurgent and dissident groups in that region, preventing any sort of true peace from taking hold, and raising the likelihood that wide-scale violence might again break out. Now, Ares stands to make the same kind of profits in North America, no matter the consequences it will have for the indigenous populations that will suffer from their arms dealing.

The first obstacles Ares needs to deal with are other players that are helping to supply arms to both the Tír military and the militant homesteaders and freedom fighters. Ares has identified two major arms dealers in particular—they want them eliminated and their weapon inventories destroyed. Once the arms dealers are out of the way, Ares can approach their buyers and poach that business for themselves. Doing this repeatedly will allow Ares to be the only game in town for smuggled weapons in the Northern Crescent region.

Once the competition is disrupted for the time being, Ares will need to move the weapons into the area and successfully make their first deliveries. The goal is to cement their new working relationship with Tír military officers, who are looking to supplement weapon surplus-

es from back home, and the homesteaders, who want weapons powerful enough to discourage Tír military incursions into their lands. Runners working this angle need to make sure the illegal arms shipments are safe and secure as they escort them through the Northern Crescent region to their destinations. Playing both sides of a war is a tactic that has been advocated and supported by Damien Knight, but it can be very dangerous for the runners caught in the middle.

This plan has not been unanimously supported at the highest levels of Ares. There has been opposition, starting with Arthur Vogel, a member of Ares' board of directors, who considers such practices "amoral" and believes it would be in the best, long-term interests of Ares to stop. Vogel will hire runners to interfere with these plans, first taking steps to stop the wetwork jobs on the arms dealers, then halting Ares shipments to customers inside the Northern Crescent. He will use his environmental activist connections to expose Ares' double-dealing to the world, including the presence of ecologically devastating chemical weapons in the arms shipments. Vogel will even encourage the activists to take evidence of these under-the-table deals to the media, along with other evidence he's collected that Ares has been dealing weapons to assorted unsavory North American groups—from CAS militias along the CAS/Aztlan border upset over how the Aztlan/Amazonia war ended, to militant groups along the CAS/UCAS border which would love nothing more to escalate tensions between the two nations, to Native American activist/terrorist groups such as Warpath which would love nothing more than to start trouble with the Anglos.

In the end, information may leak out to the media at large over Ares' illicit activities. It will be up to the player characters to determine the extent of those leaks (if any), and how badly damaged Ares' public image becomes. They will also have a hand in determining which Ares leader will gain the upper hand in this internal skirmish, Damien Knight or Arthur Vogel.

PLOT POINT 1

THE MEET

In *Stoke the Flames,* the player characters will be presented with two jobs by their contacts. The kicker: both preliminary jobs are polar opposites of each other, and will directly conflict with each other. One job will be to track down and eliminate two arms dealers in the Northern Crescent region of California. The other job would be to intercept teams of assassins targeting arms dealers in that same region, and to stop them with lethal force. For the player characters, there is an inherent benefit in learning of both jobs being out there; they will know ahead of time they will be dealing with other shadowrunners and can plan accordingly. However, once a side is chosen, the team may not play the adventures for the other side.

No matter which choice they make, the runners will meet with an Ares Johnson for the first job. Their Johnson will let them know there is the potential for future work, depending on how well they do this first job. If the player characters choose the contract targeting the arms dealers (Knight's agenda), they will learn Ares wants them to eliminate two major competitors for their plan to sell weapons to both the homesteaders and the Tír military. The first arms dealer that will be targeted by Ares is a Tír citizen named Cahir Sullivan, a member of the Laesa criminal syndicate who is selling black-market weapons to the Tír military troops. Sullivan has a base of operations in the Californian town of Montague. The second arms dealer is an Irish woman by the name of Ruari, a gunrunner with connections to the Finnigan family in Seattle. Ruari is working out of Eugene. Her biggest clients are the native homesteaders from the Northern Crescent region. The shadowrunners' instructions will be to find and kill the two arms dealers, destroy any supply of weapons they have on hand so they cannot fall into the hands of Ares' potential new clients, and discover the names of the contacts the arms dealers were working with so that Ares may approach them directly and set up an arrangement to replace those lost weapon shipments. The runners on this job may only be targeting two arms dealers, but Ares is working at a larger scale and hiring other runner teams to take out additional arms dealers throughout the Northern Crescent region in the hope of establishing a monopoly on the smuggled weapons market in the region.

If instead the runners choose to work for the Johnson trying to protect the arms dealers (Vogel's agenda), they will not immediately learn the identities of the dealers being targeted. Instead, they will be instructed

to work their contacts in the area, or do legwork within the Northern Crescent region to find out which arms dealers are moving weapons into the area in the near future, with operations large enough to make them targets. Local-based contacts or locals in various runner hangouts in the Northern Crescent region will be able to point the runners to these two arms dealers. When the runners succeed in preventing the attempt on the life of one of the arms smugglers and allow the transaction to happen, Ares will simply hire a new runner team to try and take out the second target. If so desired, the gamemaster may create more arms dealers for the player characters to go after or to protect to make this a longer campaign.

For the job of eliminating the arms dealers and limiting competition, Mr. Johnson will begin by offering 6,000 nuyen per runner. He has no problem allowing the runners to take any pieces from these arms dealers' inventories for their own use, provided those inventories are destroyed and don't wind up on the black market to be sold to the same people that Ares wants to convert into loyal customers. On an opposed Negotiation + Charisma Test, a player character may negotiate the price up by 1,000 nuyen per net hit up to a maximum of 11,000 nuyen per runner. For the run that is designed to foil Ares' attempts to eliminate its competition, Mr. Johnson will offer a starting pay of 3,000 nuyen, which may be negotiated up to 8,000 nuyen per runner.

PLOT POINT 2

WETWORK VERSUS SABOTAGE

No matter the side the player characters are working for, they will locate Cahir Sullivan in a well-known bar in Montague. Cahir is waiting for his contact to show to make the delivery with the weapons. The player characters should be encouraged to try and take out Cahir before the Tír military contact shows up to pick up the weapons. Attacking the arms dealer while the contact is present will negatively impact future relations between the contact and Ares, and will create trust issues between the contact and the player characters in the next section when they have to deliver the weapons from Ares. In addition, the Tír military contact will have Tír soldiers on hand to help take delivery of the weapons, and their presence will make such a confrontation much more dangerous. By the time the runners find Cahir, they should only have a ten- to fifteen-minute window to decide how they want to handle things with the arms dealer before his contact arrives for the pickup. The arms dealer is a regular patron in the bar, who likely has supplied weapons to many of the other regulars, who look like they could be shadowrunners themselves, or at least local gang members.

Attempting to kill Cahir inside his own watering hole may prove risky for the runners, as they may find many of the patrons taking up arms against them. They may instead try to locate his shipment and tamper with it. If a hacker gets into Sullivan's commlink or if a magic user probes the arms dealer's mind, they will find the truck filled with weapons parked two blocks away. It is guarded by three orks that Sullivan brought with him as muscle. These three orks are staunchly loyal to the arms dealer and cannot be bought off. If the truck comes under attack and word gets back to Sullivan that someone is trying to tamper with it, he will run out of the bar to help protect his shipment. If the player characters are trying to interfere with Ares' plans to kill the arms dealer, they will find shadowrunners in the process of trying to use this tactic to lure him out of the bar instead.

The other contact the runners will need to take out or protect is the woman named Ruari. By the time they find her, she will already be on the road, heading to her contact to make the delivery to a militant group of homesteaders in Eugene. There is no time to intercept Ruari before she gets underway. The player characters will need to intercept the truck while she is on the road to stop the weapons from being delivered. Follow the rules for vehicle combat on p. 198, *SR5*. In addition to the three guards situated inside the trailer of the semi-truck, Ruari has heard rumors that someone is gunning for arms dealers in the area, so she has hired a local chapter of the Ancients to provide security for the truck while it is in transit. There will be anywhere from six to twelve bikers escorting the truck to its destination. The player characters will need to deal with this escort if they want to stop that truck. If the player characters are trying to sabotage the efforts of Ares to take out this weapons shipment and this arms dealer, they may need to attack the runners who have been hired to attack this convoy in transit. In doing so, they will likely get caught up in a crossfire from both the Ancients and rival shadowrunners. Mr. Johnson will not have any problems with the runners taking weapons out of these shipments for their own personal use, but the rest of the inventory must be destroyed.

At the end of this job, depending on the direction the gamemaster and the players took, either the two arms dealers are dead and the weapon shipments are destroyed (minus gear the runners have taken for themselves) and Ares is given the contact information for the local players buying weapons for their causes, or the player characters succeeded in preventing the shipments from being harmed, and the two arms dealers were allowed to complete their transactions, forcing those loyal to Knight to sell their weapons elsewhere in the Northern Crescent region. Fortunately for Damien Knight, there remains a high demand for smuggled weapons in the area, and plenty of sources to choose from.

PLOT POINT 3

MAKING THE DELIVERY VERSUS INTERCEPTION

For player characters working to advance Damien Knight's agenda: Once the rival arms dealers have been eliminated, Ares will contact the locals and set up new arrangements to sell Ares weapons directly to the local groups, replacing the slain arms dealers in this new agreement. Mr. Johnson (assuming he was satisfied by the performance of the runners on the last job) will hire the runners again a week later to escort the two weapon shipments from Seattle to the Northern Crescent region and make the deliveries to the two groups on behalf of Ares. Mr. Johnson will offer an initial payment of 5,000 nuyen per runner; this may be negotiated up to a maximum payment of 12,000 nuyen per runner.

The shipment the player characters will be escorting will contain two trucks; one meant for the homesteaders and the other for the Tír military. The delivery for the shipments can be made in any order. Because these are illicit weapons shipments, they cannot be legally carried across the border. To get from Seattle to the Northern Crescent region of California, the player characters will need to cross the borders of both the Salish-Shidhe Council and Tír Tairngire, feats that will require a smuggler's services. If the player characters do not already have smuggler contacts, they may reach out to the shadow community to locate one. Searching the shadow community, they will find a smuggler capable of taking them all the way down to the Northern Crescent region—a human smuggler by the name of Phantom.

If the runners tell him they need to make two deliveries, one to each side of the conflict, he will let the runners know that he has resources to stash one of the trucks in the Northern Crescent region while they make the first delivery, and then they can come back and pick up the truck for the second delivery. Phantom owns a warehouse that he uses for a temporary safehouse to stash smuggled goods while they are in transit. He even has muscle at this warehouse to safeguard the merchandise. If the runners accept his offer to stash the second

truck at this warehouse during their first delivery, they will have the opportunity to meet Treadle. She and four other metahumans are hired to stand guard at the warehouse, until the final delivery truck is gone.

Getting down to the Northern Crescent region with Phantom's assistance should be easier for the runners than trying to cross the borders on their own. The smuggler knows weaknesses in border security and he knows when the border guards that he's bought off are on duty and where their patrol routes are. He also has other assets that can redirect drones and patrols so that they create blind spots in security. But this does not mean transporting the trucks should be without peril. There are lots of bandits and go-gangs, especially on long stretches of road where there are no regular patrols or areas of civilization, where they will try to hijack semi-trucks and steal their cargo. This is not something Phantom can avoid, and he will warn the player characters about that before they head off down to the Northern Crescent region. So the player characters should still be prepared to deal with opposition along the route. Mr. Johnson also warns the runners that there are canisters of chemical agents in the shipment, and that it would be best to avoid situations where these canisters get bounced around too much, if only to ensure their continued health.

If the player characters go along with the plan to leave the shipment of guns at Phantom's warehouse as they make their first delivery to either the Tír military or to the homesteaders, the warehouse will be attacked by gangers trying to score an easy payday. They will also be attacked by runners hired by the opposing side of Ares to sabotage these deals. Treadle and the other members of Phantom's muscle will be capable of protecting the second shipment for the player characters. Complications may arise for the player characters when they try to make the second delivery. The opposing side will have spies keeping tabs on their enemy's activities, and they may have observed the runners' first weapons delivery. If this is the case, the contact with the other side will be openly hostile toward the shadowrunners and may even choose to double-cross them, trying to seize the weapons without paying them or the "traitorous" megacorp, Ares. If this should happen, Ares would need to find and establish a working relationship with another contact who can buy their weapons sell the weapons. The player characters' Mr. Johnson may require them to sit on the weapons until another contact can be made to sell the weapons to the homesteaders or to the Tír military.

For player characters working for Vogel's faction: Mr. Johnson wants to hire the player characters to stop delivery of two Ares arms shipments before they reach their destination. What makes this assignment different is that the player characters must not destroy the weapons immediately. Both shipments include chemical agents that could have a devastating impact on the environment, not to mention the player characters if they are exposed to them. The runners need to gain control of the shipping trucks without harming the contents. Vogel's side is okay with the runners taking pieces of the shipment for their own arsenals, provided none of that involves the chemical weapons. Mr. Johnson representing Vogel wants the runners to make recordings of the shipment. This will be used as evidence of Ares' illegal arms dealing in the next section. None of the crates or weapons are branded as Ares, so Mr. Johnson will provide authentic labels to put on the crates and chemical weapons containers; labels that Mr. Johnson desires to be seen in the trideo recording that will be going to the media. Once the recordings are made, the runners will blow up the arms shipment, costing Ares both the weapons and the contacts to whom they were promised. Mr. Johnson, representing Arthur Vogel's interests, will initially offer the runners 4,000 nuyen per runner, but this can be negotiated up to a maximum payment of 8,000 nuyen per runner. The player characters will be instructed not to destroy the chemical agents themselves, but to turn them over to him directly.

Mr. Johnson does not know the exact route these weapon shipments will take, but he has access to powerful eco-activist and eco-terrorist groups that are highly motivated to make sure this weaponry doesn't enter this conflict. Mr. Johnson can put the runners in touch with these groups (Terra First!, Sierra Inc., Green Cells), so they can use their organizations as eyes and ears to locate the shipments. After contacting these groups, the player characters will learn which route each shipment is taking, along with the best places for ambushing the convoy en route to the Northern Crescent region. For the player characters that are escorting these Ares weapon shipments, these groups may also actively interfere with their smuggling job.

At the end of this section, those working for the Johnson loyal to Damien Knight will have successfully delivered the weapons and established new business relationships for Ares in this powder-keg area of North America. For those working for the Johnson loyal to Vogel, they will have intercepted and destroyed the shipments, save for the chemical agents. They will have also acquired evidence that could implicate Ares in criminal activities, potentially giving the megacorporation yet another black eye.

PLOT POINT 4

SUPPRESSION VERSUS DISSEMINATION

At this point, the player characters may feel that their work is done in the Northern Crescent region. However, there is one last job. For those working indirectly for Damien Knight, Mr. Johnson will inform them that Ares Intelligence has uncovered a plot to reveal sensitive information to the media about Ares' arms-dealing activi-

ties. Ares intelligence will have learned that a cell of Terra First! has recorded evidence of Ares weapons deals and is planning on exposing them to the media. In addition to evidence of the arms dealing in this part of North America, Ares Intelligence believes information on Ares' other activities around North America have been given to this cell in order to hurt Ares' public image. This cell must be stopped, and the evidence destroyed. The cell members must also be interrogated or evidence recovered that will expose the mole inside Ares who gave the cell this information. The player characters will track the terrorist group to one of their safe houses, where they are getting ready to meet with a reporter to hand off the sensitive material that will expose. Or the cell might already be on the road, leading the runners to engage once more in vehicle combat. The runners will need to make sure they are able to recover evidence identifying the individual who gave this Terra First! cell this sensitive information on Ares. If they can do that by hacking a commlink, then the runners will not need to keep the Terra First! cell members alive. However, if the runners are not able to find evidence of the mole in their data files, they will need to make sure they have survivors to interrogate. If the runners learn the identity of the reporter with whom the Terra First! group is meeting, they could intercept and eliminate him or her prior to the meet. They could then lie in wait to ambush the terrorists when they arrive. In the instances where the runners attack Terra First! at either their hideout or on the road, one member of the group will choose to try to send the information to the reporter's commlink. If the runners are not careful, the reporter may still end up with some of the data that they can use to expose Ares and harm its reputation. In the end, if the runners successfully identify the Johnson responsible for trying to interfere in Damien Knight's plans, that Johnson will end up dead, and Knight will have eliminated another Ares employee disloyal to his leadership.

If the runners are working with the Mr. Johnson who is loyal to Arthur Vogel, they will be the ones used to deliver this damning evidence to the media. Mr. Johnson will encourage the runners to disseminate this intelligence to more than one reporter, to make sure it gets out. The runners will be stalked by rival shadowrunners who were hired by the Johnson working for Damien Knight to prevent this evidence from getting out.

The Mr. Johnson who is loyal to Damien Knight offers the runners 10,000 nuyen apiece to carry out this job. Negotiations may increase this amount to 15,000 nuyen per runner. The Johnson loyal to Arthur Vogel will match this payment.

CHARACTERS

CAHIR SULLIVAN

Cahir Sullivan is an elf within the Laesa crime syndicate, the "elven mafia" that has been mostly active in Seattle's Tarislar neighborhood but has been extending its reach into Tír Tairngire. Sullivan is a man in his late 60s who has been running weapons since the conflict between the Tír and the Northern Crescent Region began in 2036. Sullivan has two scars on his face, one over his right eye, the other over his right cheek. He has seen a lot of fighting in this area and has been responsible for much of it through the sale of his weapons to the Tír Peace Force. Sullivan is quite capable and intelligent. He would not have lasted this long if he didn't know how to handle himself. Sullivan is a member of the Brat'mael (Black Sun) political group inside the Tír, a racist group devoted to elven supremacy. Sullivan has short, sandy brown hair and blue eyes.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG
[illegible]	7	[illegible]	4	5	4	4	6	3.15	5

Condition Monitor	11/11
Armor	8
Limits	Physical 6 (7), Mental 6, Social 7
Physical Initiative	9 (12) + 1(4)D6
Skills	Athletics skill group 6, Automatics 8 (SMG +2), Computer 5, Con 7, Heavy Weapons 5, Longarms 7, Negotiation 8, Perception 7, Performance 6 (Presentation +2), Pilot Ground Craft 6, Pistols 8 (Heavy Pistols +2), Throwing Weapons 4, Unarmed Combat 3
Qualities	Prejudiced (non-elves, Radical)
Augmentations	Cybereyes [betaware, Rating 4, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision, vision enhancement Rating 3], wired reflexes 3 (deltaware)
Gear	Full-suit form-fitting body armor (8), Fairlight Caliban (Device Rating 7)
Weapons	Ingram Smartgun X [SMG, Acc 4(6), DV 8P, SA/BF/FA, RC 1(2), AP –4, 32(c), w/APDS ammo, a gas-vent 2 system, smartgun system, integral sound suppressor] Savalette Guardian [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(7), DV 8P, SA/BF, AP –5, RC 1, 12(c), w/ APDS ammo, smartlink]

RUARI

Ruari has been with the Finnigan family since she was recruited as a street kid. She worked her way through the ranks to become one of their arms dealers working in the Northern Crescent region. Ruari is a feisty human woman in her mid-30s with shoulder-length red hair, and she takes shit from no one. She's not as experienced working the shadows as Sullivan, but she is still a good negotiator and a force to be reckoned with.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG
4	5	5	4	4	5	6	6	5	2

Condition Monitor	10/10
Armor	16
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 7, Social 7
Physical Initiative	11 + 1D6
Skills	Con 4, Firearms skill group 5, Leadership 5, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 5, Negotiation 4, Unarmed Combat 4
Augmentations	Orkoskin 4
Gear	Armor jacket [12]
Weapons	Ares Crusader II [Machine Pistol, Acc 5(7), DV 8P, SA/BF, AP +2, 40(c) w/ hollow point ammo, gas-vent 2, internal smartgun system] Enfield AS-7 [Shotgun, Acc 4(5), DV 14P, SA/BF, AP –2, 24(d), w/ explosive rounds, top-mounted laser sight]

STREET MUSCLE

(ORKS, PROFESSIONAL RATING 2)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
6	4	3	6	2	2	2	2	3.7

Condition Monitor	14
Armor	12
Limits	Physical 9, Mental 3, Social 4
Physical Initiative	5 + 1D6
Skills	Blades 6, Perception 4, Pistols 4, Unarmed Combat 5
Augmentations	Cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ low-light, smartlink, thermographic vision], cyberarms [2, obvious, customized, Str/Agi 8, w/ spurs]
Gear	Armored jacket (12), commlink
Weapons	Spurs [Implant Weapon, DV 11P, AP –2] Ares Predator V [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(7), DV 8P, SA, AP –1, 15(c) w/ regular ammo]

ANCIENTS BIKER

(ELF, PROFESSIONAL RATING 3)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
5	5	5(7)	4	3	3	3	4	5.1

Condition Monitor	11
Armor	7
Limits	Physical 6(7), Mental 4, Social 6
Physical Initiative	8(11) + 1D6
Skills	Automotive Mechanic 5, Blades 4, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 6 (Bikes +2), Pistols 5, Unarmed Combat 6
Augmentations	Reaction enhancers 3
Gear	Commlink, padded leather (7)
Weapons	Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, Acc 4, DV 7P, SA, AP –1, 8(m) w/ regular ammo] Ruger Super Warhawk [Revolver, Acc 5, DV 9P, SS, AP –2, 6(cy) w/ regular ammo] Combat knife [Blade, Acc 6, DV 6P, AP –3]

TREADLE

A new face on JackPoint, Treadle is 24 years old and has been working much of the northwestern sections of North America, from Seattle and Vancouver down to Las Vegas and Los Angeles. Treadle is a female ork who is gifted in the magical arts, specifically as an adept. Treadle stands a little shorter than your average ork but has the personality to make even the most veteran shadowrunner get out of her way. Treadle is just starting out in her career in the shadows, and is looking to expand her connections and her talents. She has short black hair and brown eyes.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M	EDG
6	5	5	7	4	3	3	3	5	5	2

Condition Monitor	11/10
Armor	12(14)
Limits	Physical 8(9), Mental 5, Social 6
Physical Initiative	9 + 1(3)D6
Skills	Automatics 6, Blades 5, Con 2, Heavy Weapons 4, Negotiation 2, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols 3, Running 4, Sneaking 4
Qualities	Adept
Adept Powers	Critical Strike (0.5), Elemental Strike (0.5), Improved Reflexes 2 (2.5), Killing Hands (0.5), Mystic Armor 2 (1), Nerve Strike (1)
Gear	Armor jacket (12), commlink
Weapons	Ares Alpha [Assault Rifle, Acc 5(7), DV 11P, AP –2,SA/BF/FA, RC 2, 42(c) w/regular ammo, underbarrel grenade launcher, smartgun system. Grenade launcher is loaded with high explosive grenades, DV 16P, SS, AP –2, 6(c)] Uzi IV [SMG, Acc 4(5), DV 7P, AP —, BF, RC (1), 24(c) w/ regular ammo] Combat Knife [Blade, Acc 6, DV 9P, AP –3]

TERRA FIRST! SOLDIER

(DWARF, PROFESSIONAL RATING 3)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
6	3	3	5	5	3	4	5	2.8

Condition Monitor	12
Armor	18
Limits	Physical 7, Mental 5, Social 6
Physical Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Con 5, Impersonation 4, Influence skill group 4, Longarms 4, Perception 6, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols 7, Sneaking 4, Unarmed Combat 5
Augmentations	Cyberarm [full, w/ large smuggling compartment, heavy cyber pistol], dermal plating 4, smuggling compartment
Gear	Armor jacket [12], commlink
Weapons	Heavy cyber pistol [Heavy Pistol, Acc 4(6), DV 7P, AP –1, SA, RC —, w/ regular ammo] Defiance T-250 [Shotgun, Acc 4, DV 10P, AP –1, SS/SA, RC —, w/ regular ammo]

DARK RECRUITING

1830 HOURS, FEBRUARY 27, 2077

The call came in at precisely 1030 hours as a blocked caller on his commlink. Joshua Tompkins had not quite finished up his meeting with his superiors at Manadyne, but he knew precisely who was calling. Politely, Tompkins finished his part in the meeting, excused himself, and answered the call. Before the other party could speak a word, Tompkins said, "My meeting ran late. I am still in the building. I will need to call you back once I am on the road." Tompkins grabbed his jacket and his attaché case, and headed to his waiting armored limousine. Once he was alone, he called the person back on an encrypted line.

"Judge Roux, my apologies for not being able to take your call the moment it came in. I needed to get away from the office to ensure utmost privacy."

"Never mind that, Warden Tompkins," replied a woman's voice. "I have reviewed your report for last month, and I must say it is quite impressive. You brought in three new recruits, and you succeeded in planting spies inside Horizon's Dawkins Group and in Ares' magic group. Quite remarkable feats. At this rate, you'll make the Lodge of Mordred in no time."

"That's the plan."

"Because of the tremendous success you have had, the Lodge has more work for you."

"I look forward to the opportunity of serving the Lodge in any way I can."

"Good to hear. This is the list of new corporations into which we would like our next batch of spies to be inserted."

The woman sent over the encrypted document to Tompkins' commlink. Taking a few seconds to decrypt the file, the Black Lodge member quickly reviewed the contents. "Mystics and Magicks. HermeTech Associates. Locus Elementum. The Arcanum. Hmm."

"Is there a problem, Warden?" asked Judge Roux.

"The Arcanum is going to be a problem. You know *he* has instituted far more stringent security measures that have proven problematic for us. As I recall, the Lodge has tried to insert four spies into Saeder-Krupp's magic-base subsidiaries over the last two years, and all of them have been uncovered and eliminated. I would hate for that failure to taint my sterling record with the Lodge."

"This is why we are trying something different with this next one. We will not try to insert a brand-new employee into their ranks. Instead, we will replace an existing one; one who's been with the company for a long time, and whose low profile should allow him to go unnoticed. We have been studying the target for some time, and the spy has already been modified to assume the target's life. Everything is ready to go for the insertion. Rest assured, Warden Tompkins, that the Lodge is not setting you up to fail."

"Based on your word alone, I have confidence in our success. I will make the necessary arrangements. And what of the runner team that I use? Should I eliminate them at the end of the operation as per usual?"

"No," Judge Roux said. "I have heard of many wetwork teams missing their marks and causing bigger problems for their employers when they fail. If one of our wetwork teams misses their marks now, the runners would be in a position to burn us badly with a vendetta. No, we will leave them alone. The streets will do our work for us, and ensure them early deaths. But if any manage to survive their lifestyle over the course of the next two years, we will revisit this loose end and terminate them, when they least expect us to return."

"Very good, Judge. I will start reaching out to the runner community and recruiting our talent at once."

OVERVIEW

For years, the AA corporation Manadyne has been seen as a rising leader in the field of theoretical and applied mystical arts, and has become invested in almost every business aspect relating to the magical community, from research and development of spell formulae and new enchanting techniques to magical security and talismongering. Manadyne was founded in 2049 in Boston as a diversified magical consultancy firm. Their profile received a tremendous boost when the great dragon Dunkelzahn left them 80 million nuyen in his will. Such a bequest brought with it scores of new investors and new capital. Since 2056, Manadyne has expanded rapidly, which included the buyout of a technical firm Mangadyne that allowed it to diversify its interests into technical fields. Their growth brought a new suitor in their neighboring megacorp, and in 2075 they merged into the NeoNET corporate behemoth as part of NeoNET's aggressive work around the new Matrix. But its success has not come without a price; it has garnered the unwanted attention of the Black Lodge, seeking to corrupt it from the inside for its own purposes. For more information on Manadyne, see *Corporate Guide,* p. 208.

There has been subtle evidence of the Black Lodge's involvement with Manadyne. In 2067, Manadyne acquired the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Fund, which oversees the former estate of the late United States president, Thomas Jefferson. This site has become a power site for mages belonging to the Black Lodge, used covertly to advance their agenda. Manadyne has also been used to funnel funds to political campaigns to get members of the Black Lodge elected to political positions of power within North America. In this adventure, the Black Lodge will once again be seeking to expand its reach and influence, this time into rival corporations, many of which are owned by the megacorporations.

For more information on the Black Lodge, refer to *Conspiracy Theories, Dirty Tricks* and *Street Grimoire.*

PLOT POINT 1

THE MEET

When the runners meet with Mr. Johnson, he identifies himself as Jayden Riley, a mid-level executive within Manadyne. Riley informs the runners that the job involves inserting corporate spies into rival corporations in different parts of the world. In reality, these are double agents, serving as spies for the Black Lodge. This will mean forcing targeted individuals out of their positions so that Manadyne's spies may be inserted in their place. The job will require a lot of travelling, and as such, Riley has arranged for a travel stipend of 75,000 nuyen for the runners to cover their travel expenses to their various destinations. Mr. Johnson feels this should cover of all of the runners' travel expenses for this run. The runners will be allowed to keep the remainder of this travel stipend as a bonus at the end of the run should they manage to insert all the spies that Riley wants planted. The amount of this travel stipend is non-negotiable. He tells the runners that the corporations he is looking to plant his spies in include: Mystics and Magicks (Aztechnology), HermeTech Associates (MCT), Locus Elementum (Renraku), and The Arcanum (Saeder-Krupp). For this run, Riley will pay the runners 15,000 nuyen per runner. This amount is negotiable, and the runners may get Riley to increase this pay by 1,000 nuyen per each net hit on an opposed Negotiation + Charisma Test (25,000 nuyen max). The runners will be travelling to the following sprawls: San Diego, Seattle, Neo-Tokyo, and Manhattan.

If the runners investigate Riley's story, they will find that Manadyne has no one employed by the name of Jayden Riley. If they do a facial recognition scan comparing Riley's face to the personnel files for the corporation, they will find no one matching his profile. Mr. Johnson does in fact work for Manadyne, but he is using a physical mask spell to protect his true identity. If any Awakened characters try to assense him during the meet, they will need to make an opposed test using Assensing + Intuition versus Mr. Johnson's Magic + initiate grade. Mr. Johnson is using extended masking to protect his astral signature and his physical mask spell from scrutiny. Mr.

Johnson is a high-level initiate within the Black Lodge; penetrating Mr. Johnson's extended masking will not be easy for the player characters. If the runners inquire as to where the funds for the run are coming from, they will not be able to find it, as no funds are being expended by the corporation itself for this job. All funds are coming from an off-the-books account owned by the Black Lodge. Riley's endgame is not just to steal corporate secrets from rival corporations, but to use his corporate spies to begin corrupting these corporations from the inside and bending the employees to the will of the Black Lodge, much like a cancer invading a healthy body.

Jayden Riley will ask the runners to be as subtle as possible in forcing the targeted individuals out of their positions so that the Black Lodge's operatives can either be moved into that position from somewhere else within the corporation or can be brought in from the outside with as little scrutiny and suspicion as possible. If something goes wrong, the runners are expected to help clean up the mess, and set things right to getting their spies into these corporations.

PLOT POINT 2

MYSTICS AND MAGICKS–SAN DIEGO

The first target on Jayden Riley's list is Mystics and Magicks. The target for replacement works in Mystics and Magicks' central offices in San Diego. The target's name is Addison Maestas, a human woman who has worked for Mystics and Magicks for nearly thirty years. Maestas is a Senior Vice President in charge of Consumer Relations. Riley would prefer that they convince the woman to retire, and do so without the use of violence against her. To that end, Riley wants the runners to try to bribe her into retiring first, offering the runners a stipend of nearly five million nuyen to convince her to leave her position, as well as write a letter of reference for her future replacement, Joaquin Aguilar, a professor at San Diego State University who is Manadyne's choice to spy on Mystics and Magicks. Riley makes it clear any unused stipend to bribe Maestas into leaving her position must be returned to him.

Contacting Maestas will not be easy. Maestas is not a person who socializes with shadowrunners. She has underlings that perform that job for her. Maestas always has a detail of five well-trained bodyguards as her personal security detail, at her side at all times. Riley would advise the runners not to approach Maestas at work. He wants to leave as little evidence as possible that the runners ever approached the target. Maestas lives in a AAA-security neighborhood in Ocean Beach. Once the characters meet with Addison Maestas, they will need to succeed on an Opposed Negotiation + Charisma Test to convince Maestas to accept the Black Lodge's offer. Negotiations with Maestas will receive a +2 dice pool modifier due to the fact that Maestas has been considering retirement and has health issues that have been slowly pushing her to that decision. If the runners fail on the Negotiations Test, physical intimidation will work to convince Maestas to take the money and walk away.

The big thing to remember is that when player characters are running in San Diego, they are in a sprawl that belongs to Aztlan. When working in San Diego, the runners will need to play by Aztlan rules, and be mindful of Aztlan laws. Signage, and a vast majority of AROs, are written in Nahuatl or Aztlaner Spanish. It is very likely that if the runners have pissed off Aztechnology in the past, their history with that megacorporation could come up and bite them in the hoops, with local law enforcement officers in San Diego harassing the player characters and arresting them if there are any warrants out for them, either from Aztlan or Aztechnology. For more information on Aztlan, refer to *Sixth World Almanac,* p. 166, or the *Aztlan* sourcebook.

PLOT POINT 3

HERMETECH ASSOCIATES–SEATTLE

The next sprawl the player characters will travel to is Seattle, focusing on HermeTech Associates, a subsidiary of Mitsuhama Computer Technologies. It may make sense to do this job first if the player characters are based out of Seattle. The target for this job is 34-year-old thaumaturgical researcher Tristan Mitchell. In this part of the run, Mitchell is not close to retirement, so they would have to talk to him about resigning his cushy position with HermeTech Associates. The good news is that Mitchell is not so high up in the corporation that he warrants special security measures such as a security detail. Riley would provide the runners the same amount of nuyen that they had to buy off Maestas in the previous section. The runners might assume that this will be as easy as buying off Maestas. After all, what wageslave would not want to become a multi-millionaire overnight?

When approached by the shadowrunners, Mitchell will sound receptive to the runners' offer and will try to lead them into believing he will take it. The player characters will need to make an Opposed Con + Charisma Test to determine that Mitchell is just telling the runners what they want to hear. In reality, Mitchell is quite satisfied with his job, has a high degree of loyalty for his corporation, and has no intention of leaving his position. And he realizes what they are trying to do. A successful Judge Intentions Test (Charisma + Intuition) will suggest to the player characters that Mitchell may have the intention of reporting their offer to HermeTech Associates' internal security (which he does). If the player characters make these tests and learn of Mitchell's duplicity during the meeting, they

can choose to extract him at that time, possibly making him a victim of an unfortunate accident. This will open up his position, leaving HermeTech Associates unaware that a mole is trying to infiltrate their company.

However, if Mitchell succeeds in bluffing the runners into telling them he'll think about the offer, or even if he initially accepts the offer, he will promptly go from the meeting with the shadowrunners to HermeTech Associates' internal security and report the incident. He will not resign even if he was paid off, and corporate security will keep a close eye on him to make sure nothing happens to him. If he told the team he would think it over, he will contact the runners again for another meet. This meeting is a set up. Corporate security wants to capture the shadowrunners and interrogate them to find out who is trying to infiltrate their company. The player characters would then be ambushed by six members of the corporate security forces. Either outcome will make an insertion by Black Lodge spies into the Seattle branch of HermeTech Associates nearly impossible, as any outside candidate coming into the company will be given much more thorough scrutiny for the foreseeable future. Jayden Riley, however, has an alternate location to try to get another spy of the Black Lodge's into HermeTech Associates: the Santa Fe offices in the Pueblo Corporate Council. Riley has even picked out another employee to target; a 28-year-old shaman named Valeria Reyes. This time, if the runners approach the shaman to bribe her, the bribe will work, and the position will be opened up and made available for the Black Lodge/Manadyne spy.

PLOT POINT 4

LOCUS ELEMENTUM–NEO-TOKYO

After the runners have visited San Diego and Seattle (and maybe even Santa Fe), the next job Riley has for the runners will take the player characters outside of North America and across the Pacific Ocean to Neo-Tokyo. The player characters' next target will be a middle-aged man named Mamoru Ueno, a scholar within Locus Elementum, Renraku's magic group. Instead of just a bribe, Jayden Riley realizes Ueno is a man who could only be lured away from Renraku by a prestigious job offer at a high-profile university, giving him an opportunity to excel in the realm of academia, outside of a corporate influence. Thanks to the Black Lodge's connections, the dean of Thaumaturgical Studies has opened up at Georgetown University in Washington DeeCee. The position would be offered to Ueno if he agrees to resign his current position, leave Locus Elementum, and recommend his replacement—which would be the Black Lodge spy.

Ueno would be willing to accept the position, but he knows Renraku will not allow him to leave the Lotus Elementum magic group voluntarily. He will agree to take the position, but he will need himself and his wife to be extracted, which means he won't be able to help with selecting his successor if the ruse is to be believed that he was taken involuntarily. This is not the optimal solution, but if informed about it, Jayden Riley will agree to the plan. The runners will then need to plan on extracting Ueno and his wife. Ueno lives in a Renraku-owned arcology in Chiba. Ueno's wife's movements are heavily monitored by Renraku. She is not permitted to leave the arcology, as Renraku believes the arcology provides everything she would need, and the only times Ueno is allowed to leave is when he goes to work. Even then, he boards a Renraku shuttle with ten other employees and is shuttled back and forth by Renraku security to the Locus Elementum headquarters. Ueno and his wife live on the thirtieth floor of the arcology. Most of the security is handled by standard Renraku corporate security. However, inside this sixty-story arcology are key executives and other high-level assets, and as such, there are two squads (eight members each) of Red Samurai on site, ready for trouble. The runners should find it much easier to extract Ueno while he is in transit, away from the arcology and all of its security. If the player characters struggle with trying to extract Ueno's wife, Riley has an alternate plan; merely extract Ueno, convince him that his wife is being transported separately for her safety, and deliver Ueno to a Black Lodge contact in Neo-Tokyo (someone who is not Riley). Once the runners have dropped off Ueno, his fate is no longer their concern. However, the Black Lodge contact will use a combination of drugs and magic to permanently alter and erase Ueno's memories of his wife. He will not remember ever being married. Ueno will be perfectly content in his new, comfortable life, with no memory of the family life he left behind.

The runners may assume this job is over, and may even be home for downtime when they get the follow-up call from Riley three weeks later. Despite having put forth a highly qualified candidate, Renraku has hired someone else for Ueno's position instead of the Manadyne/Black Lodge spy. Riley needs them to fly back to Neo-Tokyo and alter the records to indicate that the hiring of the other candidate was a "clerical error," and he will need to forge documents showing that the Manadyne/Black Lodge spy was actually the candidate hired for the position. The host rating for where the documents are held is 9. The runners will also need to intimidate the hiring manager into going along with this story and not challenging the changes.

The hiring manager's name is Shiori Murakami. He is 42 years old and far easier to access that Ueno and his family. Murakami lives in a middle-class apartment complex in the Bunkyo neighborhood. For information on this neighborhood, see p. 81, *Corporate Enclaves*. Bribery will not work on Murakami, but threatening the life of her husband will get Murakami to abide by the changes the runners have made. She will not speak a word about it to anyone.

PLOT POINT 5

THE ARCANUM–MANHATTAN

The final job for Jayden Riley and Manadyne will take place in Manhattan. The target for this last run will be an ork enchanter by the name of Kilian Lester. For this job, Riley does not require the runners to force the target to resign or retire. Since the conclusion of the Great Dragon civil war, which helped ignite a shadow war between the dragons and the Black Lodge, and since the emergence of cognitive fragmentation disorder, intense scrutiny is given to all new hires by Saeder-Krupp; so much so that Riley believes no Manadyne spy could successfully infiltrate the corporation as a new hire without their cover. Instead, they have studied Lester over the last year and have meticulously studied his habits and lifestyle, and they have arranged for a spy to be modified to look exactly like the enchanter so he can replace him and take over his life. Existing employees are subject to less scrutiny, and given that Lester has been with the corporation for thirteen years, the scrutiny on him will likely be close to being non-existent. The player characters may have to resort to killing Lester and making sure his body is never found.

Lester works in offices belonging to the The Arcanum in the S-K North America building in Midtown. Midtown is a AAA security zone. To complicate matters, Midtown is one of the most congested areas on Manhattan Island and is a patchwork of extraterritorial rights. Almost no one can take a direct drive through Midtown; most pass holders for the island must take absurd routes to honor extraterritorial rights of corporations situated in Midtown. Making a fast getaway in Midtown is not likely. And given the fact that no suspicions must be raised over the spy's identity, the runners cannot afford to make a scene involving Lester in Midtown. Midtown is also one of the most watched places on the planet, with thousands of security cameras. If the runners were to make a move in Midtown, there would be some evidence of the exchange to be found. In addition, responsibility for the security of Midtown is shared between

two security companies: Knight Errant and Winter Systems. If the player characters initiate a confrontation in Midtown, they will likely draw fire from both companies.

If the runners look into where Lester lives, they will find they caught a break. Lester lives in a sixteen-story high rise in Southside. The neighborhood is only rated a B-security zone. In addition, there is only one security company responsible for law enforcement in that area they would have to worry about: NYPD, Inc. Lester works late during the weekdays, usually spending 60+ hours at the office per week. When he comes home, it is usually late at night. The runners may arrange to ambush Lester coming home, or when he stops to eat at a restaurant. Even in a B-rated security zone, there are still a lot of security cameras, almost more than what a hacker can neutralize. It would be beneficial for the runners to make contact with locals, such as neo-anarchists, who can point them to blind spots in the security system, where the switch would need to take place without leaving behind a lot of evidence to threaten this operation. Lester does not drive in Manhattan—like a true New Yorker, he uses the subway system.

Once the runners have killed the real Lester and have swapped him out with the spy, they will be responsible for dumping the body. Along with the burdensome amount of surveillance in the sprawl, which makes a body dump very difficult, Lester's body was tagged with a stealth RFID tag. This tag will need to be disabled to ensure no one finds the body. Fortunately, Riley's contacts have informed him where the stealth tag is placed: in the back of Lester's right shoulder. The runners will need to make an Extended Medicine + Logic (10, 1 minute) Test to dig it out. If they cannot remove it themselves, they may need to hire a local runner to do it for them. However, if Riley hears of this plan, he will require the runners to take out that street-doc-for-hire. The fewer people that are aware of this switch, the better.

The runners may try and dispose of any resulting bodies themselves, or they may choose to reach out to one of the local Mafia families who have had plenty of experience disappearing bodies. Unless they have some negative reputation or experiences, they may contact any of the Mafia families for help (Carnetti, Colombo, Genovese, Lucchese or Bonnano). The Black Lodge will allow the runners on this job to live. However, this shadow organization is well known for its long-term planning and its patience. The organization may wait a few years to see if the streets take out these particular runners and do the job for them. If not, in about two years' time, even if the runners had forgotten all about this run, the Black Lodge will come after them when their guard is down, and will try and take them out with a wetwork team. Once someone is on the Black Lodge's radar, they are always on their radar.

For more information on Manhattan, see *Stolen Souls*, p. 98, and the *Rotten Apple: Manhattan* e-book.

CHARACTERS

MR. JOHNSON

(A.K.A. JAYDEN RILEY, JOSHUA TOMPKINS)

Jayden Riley appears to the shadowrunners as a human in his mid-30s. In reality, the man behind the Riley persona is considerably older, in his late 50s, and is advancing an agenda that is unknown to the runners; an agenda that belongs to the mysterious Black Lodge. Riley is a high-level initiate and is a member of one of the Lodge of Rasputin. Use Mr. Johonson (High-Ranking Initiate), p. 158, for his stats.

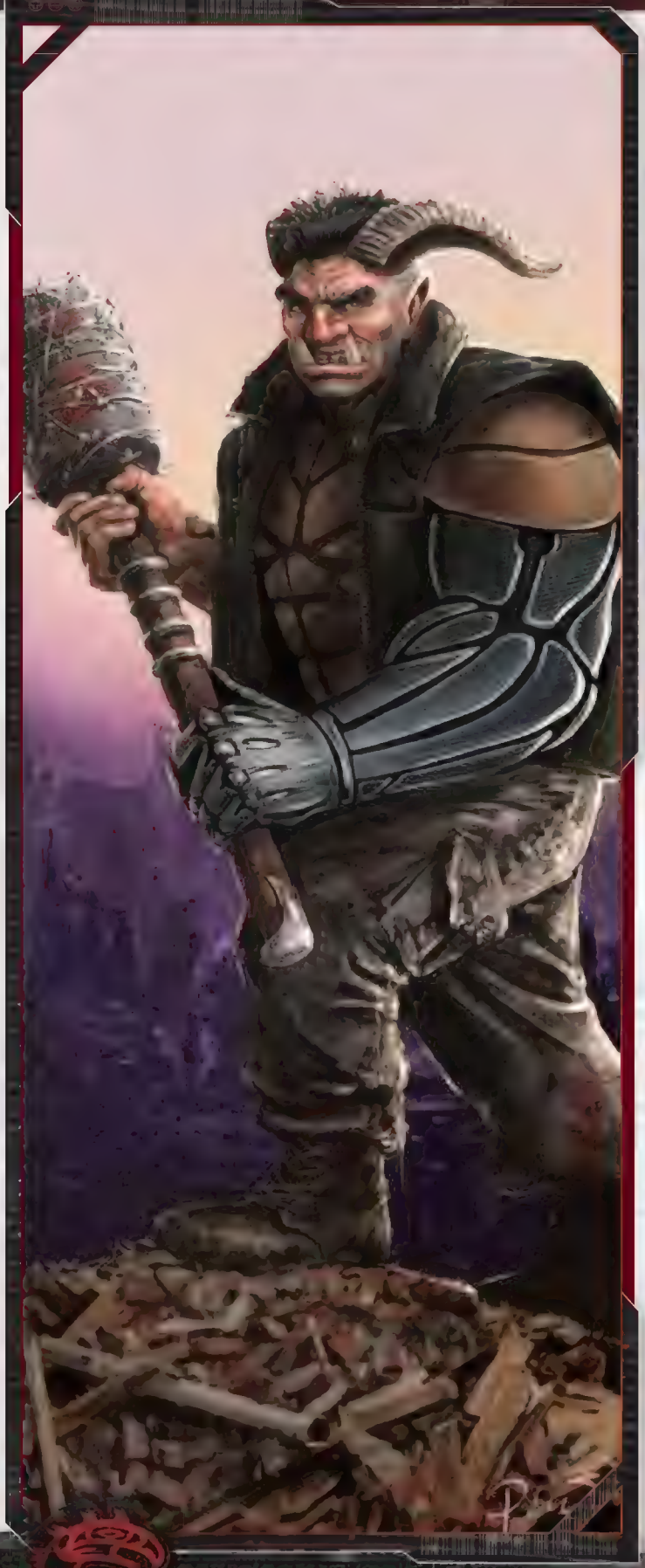
ADDISON MAESTAS

(HUMAN)

Addison Maestas is 62 years old and has been working for Mystics and Magicks for over thirty years. Maestas herself is not Awakened; her fields of expertise are marketing and communications. Maestas has access to Mystics and Magick's loyal customer base, and as such has access to information the Black Lodge desires—namely, a pool from which they may recruit from, or people they can eliminate to prevent from becoming threats. Addison is an Aztlan-born citizen and a native of San Diego.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
3	2	3	3	5	4	5	6	3.23

Condition Monitor	9/10
Armor	8
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 6, Social 8
Physical Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Con 6 (Fast Talking +2), Etiquette 5, Leadership 7 (Direct +2), Negotiation 6 (Contracts +2), Perception 7 (Visual +2)
Qualities	Analytical Mind, Bilingual (Aztlaner Spanish, English)
Augmentations	[all betaware] Cybereears [Rating 4, w/ audio enhancement 3, select sound filter, sound link], tailored pheromones 3
Gear	Auctioneer Business Clothes [8], commlink



MAESTAS' BODYGUARDS

(ORK, PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
7 (+4)	6	4 (6)	7	4	4	4	3	3.55

Condition Monitor	12/10
Armor	15
Limits	Physical 9, Mental 6, Social 5
Physical Initiative	8(10) + 3D6
Skills	Blades 4, Clubs 4, Firearms skill group 6, First Aid 5, Perception 6 (Searching +2), Sneak 4, Unarmed Combat 7 (Tae Kwon Do w/ Counter Strike, Opposing Force [Block] and Sweep techniques +2)
Qualities	Perceptive Defender
Augmentations	[all betaware] Bone Density 4, Orthoskin Rating 4, Pain Editor, Synaptic Booster 2
Gear	Light Security Amor [15], commlink
Weapons	Browning Ultra-Power [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(6), DV 6S(e), AP –6, 10(c), w/ top-mounted laser sight, stick-n-shock ammo] Stun baton [Clubs, Acc 4, Reach 1, DV 9S(e), AP –5] Unarmed [Unarmed Combat, DV 10P, AP —]

TRISTAN MITCHELL

(HUMAN)

Tristan Mitchell is a rising star within HermeTech Associates and is very content with his position as thaumaturgical researcher. Mitchell is Awakened, but combat is not his thing. He would rather lie and bluff others into believing he has accepted their offer, instead of physically confronting them. When push comes to shove, though, Mitchell will use his magic to defend himself.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M
2	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	6	8

Condition Monitor	10/11
Armor	8
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 7, Social 7
Physical Initiative	9 + 1D6
Astral Initiative	10 + 2D6
Skills	Arcana 8 (Spirit Formula +2), Assensing 6, Astral Combat 6, Banishing 5, Binding 7, Con 6, Counterspelling 4, Negotiations 4, Perception 7, Ritual Spellcasting 6, Spellcasting 6, Summoning 6
Qualities	Magician
Initiate Grade	2
Metamagics	Divination, Psychometry
Spells	Astral Armor, Astral Message, Catalog, Clean (Air), Clean (Earth), Fix, Ice Spear, Mana Barrier, Preserve, Spirit Barrier, Spirit Zapper, Stunball, Stunbolt, Translate
Bound Spirits	2 x spirits of air (Force 4)
Gear	Commlink, Spellcasting focus (Detection, Force 5), Auctioneer Business Clothes [8]

HERMETECH ASSOCIATES CORPORATE SECURITY

(HUMANS, PROFESSIONAL RATING 3)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
5	5 (7)	4	5 (7)	4	3	3	3	4.08

Condition Monitor	11/10
Armor	18
Limits	Physical 7(8), Mental 5, Social 5
Physical Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	First Aid 5, Perception 7, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols 8, Throwing Weapons 6, Unarmed Combat 5
Augmentations	[all alphaware] Cyberears [Rating 1, w/ audio enhancement 3, damper], cybereyes [Rating 1, w/ flare compensation, smartlink], muscle replacement 2
Gear	Medium Security Armor [18], commlink
Weapons	Onotari Arms Violator [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(7), DV 5P, AP –3, RC (1), 10(c) w/ tracker rounds, advanced safety system, internal smartgun, safe target system base] Tiffani-Defiance Protector [Taser, Acc 5(6), DV 7S(e), AP –5,3(m), w/ laser sight] Flash-Bang [Grenade, DV 10S, AP –4, 10m blast radius]

MAMORU UENO

(HUMAN)

Mamoru Ueno has been working with Locus Elementum for ten years. He has been content with his work inside Locus Elementum, but he feels his career has stalled. And frankly, he is bored with work. Ueno desires to find a position in an exotic locale, in the area of academia that is outside of corporate life. He wants to teach. Ueno will be receptive to the offer the runners present him, but there is a catch: his wife. Renraku keeps tight reigns on the freedoms and movement of his wife, almost as a means to maintain control over him. Even though this is pretty common for high-level assets, Ueno resents this control. He feels it is time to move on from Renraku, though he doubts they will simply let him quit. Ueno is trapped in a life he desperately hopes the runners can free him from. The only question is whether his wife can share that new life with him ...

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M	EDG
3	3	4	4	6	5	4	4	6	8	2

Condition Monitor	10/11
Armor	8
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 7, Social 7
Physical Initiative	8 + 1D6
Astral Initiative	8 + 2D6
Skills	Alchemy 7, Arcana 6, Artificing 5, Assensing 5, Conjuring skill group 5, Counterspelling 8, Instruction 7, Negotiations 2, Perception 5, Ritual Spellcasting 8, Spellcasting 8
Qualities	Magician, Mentor Spirit (Snake)
Initiate Grade	2
Metamagics	Anchoring, Geomancy, Quickening
Spells	Analyze Device, Analyze Magic, Catalog, Mana Barrier, Sterilize, Translate
Bound Spirits	2 x spirits of man (Force 5)
Gear	Auctioneer Business Clothes [8]

KILIAN LESTER

(ORK)

Kilian Lester is an innocuous worker for The Arcanum that has been targeted by the Black Lodge and Manadyne for elimination so they can fill his position with a spy that has been made to look and act exactly like him, and to hopefully bypass the rigid security measures Lofwyr himself has enforced on the magic-based subsidiaries belonging to Saeder-Krupp. Lester is an aspected magician, whose abilities are geared solely towards enchanting. Lester is 36 years old and has been working for The Arcanum since 2064.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M
6	5	4	7	5	4	4	6	6	7

Condition Monitor	11/11
Limits	Physical 8, Mental 6, Social 8
Physical Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Alchemy 8 (Combat Spells +2), Arcana 7, Artificing 7, Assensing 6, Disenchanting 8, Perception 6
Qualities	Aspected Magician (Enchanter)
Initiate Grade	1
Metamagics	Geomancy
Gear	Alchemical Preparations: 1x Improved Invisibility (Force 7, Potency 5), 1 x Armor S(Force 6, Potency 4)

THE INQUISITION

I brought in Heisenberg for this, as he is the German shadow-board's internal expert on Saeder-Krupp matters. A former high-ranking intelligence analyst for S-K Prime in Essen working closely with the local inner circle, he had the rare pleasure of some personal audiences with Lofwyr (he still calls him "the boss") during his time. In the post-Bremen era, he left S-K to go private, now working mostly as an independent contractor for espionage outfits like Aegis Cognito or Infolio. Despite his history with the megacorp and current work, he shares good relationships with European hacker outfits of all "hat-colors" like the Schockwellenreiter, Brokerage X, the Helix, and the Schattengesellschaft.
Ecotope

POSTED BY: HEISENBERG

I am man enough to admit when I was wrong. I concede I would have never deemed the developments of the past years to be possible ... but the titan is truly faltering!

Although it is quite unlikely to fall any time soon, I can imagine that the plethora of S-K business analysts are still wondering what happened to the competitive edge that S-K brandished against its competitors over the decades (don't forget the corporate motto: One step ahead). It seems to have vanished into thin air, and despite NeoNET's own troubles, they are threatening to pass S-K, dropping the German giant down from the top slot on the corporate ladder to second rank.

The answer to the question is alarmingly simple. S-K lost what the boss holds most dear: control.

The reasons for that are manifold. Dunkelzahn's Legacy led to the passing of the Loremaster title to the boss. It forced him to intervene in the dragon civil war due to the severe rift in dragon society on the view of metahumans and deal with the different factions within dragonkind (often using S-K Prime's intelligence resources). In turn Lofwyr was "rewarded" by some of his fellow great dragons by having them take shots at his empire, targeting assets all over the world through their proxies. In addition, the boss had to deal with and settle an eon-long clutch vendetta with his brother Alamais, culminating with the battle of GeMiTo in which he (and S-K) burned millions of euros in resources for military gear (drones, military vehicles, S-K military personnel) and mercenary contracts (like the one with MET2K), stretching S-K resources thinner than ever.

Within Europe, many other corporations have recognized that the alpha wolf is losing its edge, and the betas (the Eurocorps) are gathering.
2XL

While he was involved in trouble-shooting the dragon conflict, control of the corporation was handed to trusted individuals, who, unfortunately, were only metahuman and not able to fully micro-manage like a great dragon from the top down (even if they are workaholic sociopaths, they cannot match the capabilities of a dragon). Work and duties were delegated down, but many managers in the Krupp empire were overstrained with too much responsibility in the hierarchical organization, where every cog is supposed to run according to its function so that the corporation can run like clockwork. This led to even further losses of assets and business due to mismanagement. My assumption has always been that the boss condoned this during the civil war, but planned to retake control of Saeder-Krupp (and the lost chunks of the business) as soon as the conflict was resolved. That's probably why he handed the Loremaster title over to Celedyr: to get rid of the responsibility and refocus on his empire.

RISE OF AN INQUISITION

Then, however, cognitive fragmentation disorder happened, which posed a new threat emerging from within the megacoporation. While inner corporate intelligence and security were able to pick up head cases very early (due to the use of an internal system called Devianz, which analyzes deviation from a citizen's baseline data and was able to spot technomancers in the early '70s), they did not know which phenomenon they were dealing with until it started spreading), they did not know which phenomenon they were dealing with until it started spreading. S-K corp-sec started investigating head cases early on, and after recognizing the nanovirus connection and the synthetic intelligence fragments (S-K has a zero tolerance policy

against unrestricted AIs), S-K began using runners to secretly extract citizens from Neu-Essen and other sites all around the world.

> For those who don't keep up, Neu-Essen is S-K's personal extraterritorial enclave within the city of Essen in the Rhine-Ruhr-megaplex, formed around the S-K HQ arcology in the mid-'70s. It is basically an autarkic city in the city, with tight security and enough military power to defend itself against attacks of great dragons.
> Ecotope

> Actually kind of a smart move. People start asking questions if their neighbors, superiors, friends, and colleagues start disappearing, especially in an enclosed environment such as an arcology, where CFD can spread very easily. People always want to know why, and when you run out of credible explanations like sudden promotions or suspensions, you start to alienate people, and rumors can do a lot of damage. Extractions provide plausible deniability, and they also supply S-K's researchers, like the ones from Advanced Frontier Cybernetics, with sufficient labrats.
> Butch

As further measure of containment, the **Innenrevision**, S-K's internal affairs office—basically their FBI, which has its origin in the company's Business Practice (= Whistleblower) Office—was vested with additional resources and power to handle the problem as the "Sacrosanct Corporate Inquisition" by the grace of the great dragon. As head cases are deviants that threaten the control and integrity of the system that is S-K (head cases don't know how to function properly, and a cog that starts a life on its own endangers the whole machine), they need to be dealt with.

THORN IN THE DRAGON'S SCALES

The problem, however, runs much deeper than that. Apart from the S-K citizens, Lofwyr's mistrust currently sits with S-K Prime, which became compromised by CFD infection. In a nutshell, S-K Prime is S-K's black CIA, the nerve center of all Saeder-Krupp inter-corporate operations and intelligence. What makes the situation worse is that it is not only is S-K Prime extremely high-tech, it is also completely decentralized (organized as a parallel structure of free-floating cells that link to one another and Saeder-Krupp at critical junctures all over the globe)—both characteristics that give Innenrevision major headaches in its task of vetting the whole organization for Lofwyr.

> Innenrevision is led by Médard Vogen, a bald and corpulent former Belgian citizen (before Belgium ceased to exist) in his mid-50s, and based in Neu-Essen, though the organization has offices in all major S-K sites. While internal affairs usually consists of psychological analysts, technomancers, social adepts, and a number of magicians skilled in metapsychology, psychometry, and analytical arcana, military assets and high-threat response teams were recently detached to support Innenrevision's inquisition operations. VVogen himself always wears latex gloves and eschews crowds, leading to rumors that he is some kind of telepath. However, since nobody was able to dig out some further info proof, it could just be germophobia.
> Ecotope

S-K Prime employs more than just analysts, however. They also have a plethora of skilled field operatives (usually highly augmented, often with nanotech gear or implants due to its subtlety). They are often deep under cover in other corporations, governments, and whatever group the boss may be interested in. Auditing the whole organization is next to impossible, may blow the cover of certain agents, and draws a lot of unwanted attention to a secret intelligence service. On the other hand, Lofwyr cannot allow S-K Prime to continue operating as it has, since pieces of it have already been subverted.

Several Brackhauses have already gone rogue and are using S-K Prime's resources to either fuel their own agendas or create trouble with other corporations, simply by hiring shadowrunners for ops that have not been green-lit by their superiors ("Brackhaus" was a cover identity used by S-K Prime black ops handlers; the rogues have been internally dubbed "**Crackhaus**" because they,

well, cracked. So the "Inquisition" is sending out special operatives and shadowrunners to hunt the Crackhauses down. In addition, Basima Oriol Diasruíz—a special-ops submerged technomancer who is rumored to be able to "hear" the virus (i.e., the synthetic fragment) as a voice in her head—has been appointed "Grand Inquisitor" and is traveling around the globe to vet all key stakeholders within S-K and clean house by any means possible.

> Sounds as if there will be plenty of job opportunities coming our way.
> Snopes

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

One of the first stops on the Inquisition entourage is New York City. Since the start of the global CFD crisis that is shaking the foundation of S-K from within, Saeder-Krupp assets in Manhattan have been turned into a corporate vanguard to research and battle the nanotech plague. Ever since Boston was locked down to contain an outbreak of another strain of the virus (this is not all public knowledge, thanks to information containment and media censorship by the Corporate Court; see *Lockdown* for more info), tangible outcomes of the research have become even more crucial. However, S-K management wants to make sure that scientists and those upper-management executives who oversee the local assets can be trusted, and that research into potential cures is not subverted or sabotaged by head cases from within.

Grand Inquisitor Diasruíz has therefore been sent to Manhattan to vet brilliant minds like those of Doctors Nadine Reinhard (Advanced Frontier Cybernetics), René Fitzgerald (Morgen-Tek GmbH), Maximilan Seiler (Spellweaver Consortium), and Kerstin Mueller (Awakened World Research). These people are spearheading the technical and magical research into the CFD virus and potential treatments (p. 110, *Stolen Souls*).

But these are not the only ones under the scrutiny of Innenrevision. Due to the escalating conflict between Saeder-Krupp and NeoNET that has made headlines in Manhattan far too often and is starting to spiral out of control, MDC rep Brent Lucas and director Stephen Aachen have to answer to internal affairs for mismanagement, incompetence, negligence, corruption, fraud, and tax embezzlement by members of their salaried workforce. News of this has been leaked to the media by shadowrunners in the last year, severely damaging the reputation of the company. During the full-blown investigation into the S-K North America arcology in Midtown and the S-K Prime building in lower Manhattan, the inquisition's investigators noticed some aberrations in the behavior of a corporate lawyer by the name of Haley Talbot (p. 106). While interviewing her under the pretext of talent scouting for the German headquarters, the analyst—using an experimental psychoanalytic interrogation technique under development by S-K known as the Witt-Goddard-Test that can pick up inhuman reactions—concluded a high likelihood of CFD infection, which is why Diasruíz has authorized a surveillance operation into Talbot, to be carried out by shadowrunners she will hire herself.

While monitoring Talbot and digging into her life, the runners will observe an increasingly erratic and inhuman behavior that occurs when she believes herself to be alone. They will follow her to an underground fight club, where they witness a strange exchange with another person, a NeoNET Johnson by the name of Jerome Evans, who infected Talbot on purpose to subvert a member of the club who works within S-K North America to gather and manipulate data that was used to expose S-K in public. Following the trail, the runners will uncover a ploy by a rogue Brackhaus who has been using both S-K and NeoNET resources to agitate the conflict between the two megacorporations and spread chaos in Manhattan to satisfy his burning hate for the elite enclave the corporations have built in the city.

PLOT POINT 1

SPEAK EASY TO THE INQUISITION

The runners are contacted by their local fixer to go immediately to New York, where they will meet that same night with an S-K Johnson (the fixer is open about his affiliation) in a modern, invite-only speakeasy club called the *Raucherzimmer* (smoker's room). They will be met by Grand Inquisitor Basima Oriol Diasruíz, who will be dressed in neo-Arab-corporate-chic style. Prior to departure from their home turf, they will receive a package with an old-fashioned matchbook from the bar in addition to several Restricted (worker) passes II (blue w/ red stripe), issued to S-K and connected to one of their fake IDs. To find the Raucherzimmer, the runners have to do some legwork across contacts or via the Matrix to locate the bar. For this the runners need to succeed in a Matrix Search Test (p. 241, *SR5*) against a threshold of 2 (the spot is not publicized, but they can find reviews by anthropologists of cool, they can attempt an appropriate Knowledge Skill Test against a threshold of 2, or they can try to get this information from contacts with ties to Manhattan). The Raucherzimmer is located in an unobtrusive building in Southside and is only advertised by a smoking-sign-projecting RFID tag that pops up only when people with the right clearance come into close proximity. The speakeasy can be entered via an unimposing door in a back alley, where the runners meet the establishment's bouncer, an ork with a cigar, asking for a light (which traditionally would be provided from one of the matchbooks for the place, like the

ones the players were given). Once the runners arrive, they are led to a back room. Diasruíz begins the briefing by scanning them for signs of CFD. Then she presents a very detailed dossier on Haley Talbot, including pictures, psychological assessments, and known relatives in New York. She is hiring them to run surveillance on her and x-ray her life without catching her attention, as she is believed to be a CFD victim. S-K wants the runners to collect evidence on her being subverted and if so, what she is up to (and how she got infected in the first place, as she should have no elevated exposure to nanotech). If necessary the inquisitor will provide background information on CFD. The blue passes the runners received give them temporary access to most of the areas that Talbot has access to in her recent work, though Diasruíz will make crystal clear that she will not tolerate any action on S-K property that needs "cleaning up" afterward. As Talbot is a potentially active virus carrier who works within the local North America division building near the center of Midtown (p.112, *Stolen Souls*), Ms. Johnson does not want the runners to waste time; they should start the job immediately to minimize the risk to local Saeder-Krupp employees. That means the runners won't have much time to prepare and must arrange for critical elements such as transportation and accommodation while preparing their surveillance on their target. As vehicles are heavily regulated by the Manhattan Development Consortium, the runners need access to the local black economy to get a personal vehicle pass, or they need to use other means of transportation to follow their target around town (taxi, a hired driver, or public transportation). Ms. Johnson will offer 4,000 nuyen per runner for up to one week of surveillance, plus a group bounty of 8,000 nuyen for every head case they are able to detect and apprehend (including the target). Negotiation attempts will not be well received by the inquisitor, though the runner might be able to make a very rational case given the risk and short notice of the job. Diasruíz will indicate that working for her and the dragon can have its own perks if they perform their job with excellence. However, If the runners insist on haggling, however, they can engage in a Negotiation + Charisma [Social] Opposed Test with a dice pool modifier of -2. Diasruíz will also provide them with a contact number to call into a mailbox every twenty-four hours to give a status update.

More information on Manhattan can be found on p. 98, *Stolen Souls*.

PLOT POINT 2

INHUMAN TARGET

Employing information from the dossier, the runners can use different angles to dig into the life of their target. Known relatives, friends, or colleagues can tell the runners (when they come with a good backstory) that Haley went completely off the radar within the past few weeks. She has not returned any comm calls, texts, or invitations; stopped going to her AIRobic class (a sports activity using flexible wands and elastic bands); and has not engaged in any social activities. Most believe that she must have started seeing someone, but they have never met the supposed romantic interest. One friend who bumped into her on the streets says that she has changed her style, cutting her hair short, losing weight, and becoming more athletic ("as if she joined an army or a cult"). But since people change all the time (especially in the fast-moving 2070s), most people the runners talk to have not given any further thought to her evolution or linked it to CFD. When they follow Haley, the runners will notice that she is mostly composed and charming during her daily business, such as at work, but she is prone to sudden outbursts when provoked, and she changes to a somewhat darker, gloomier version of herself when she believes no one is watching. If they are able to catch her changing outfits or observe her in her apartment by bugging it, they can either notice several small wounds and scars on her upper legs and torso (usually covered by clothing) or witness her repetitively inflicting wounds on herself with a razor (part of a self-loathing, self-destructing altered personality). To get into her two-bedroom flat—located an secured multi-corporate apartment complex in Inwood (A-level neighborhood)—they have to evade technical (mostly cameras) and physical security (mostly guards, Professional Rating 1-2).

If they manage to get a hold of or hack her commlink, they find a number of unreturned and unread messages, invitations, and news feeds. In addition they can find out that she has started picking up martial arts classes in a dojo/boxing gym in Newtown after work and has been accessing news feeds about professional fighting. If the runners continue to follow her in the next days, she will eventually go into a nightclub called Elite-$ (see below), but she will vanish from there to enter a secret fight club in the basement, called The Ladder, where she has a locker. While the runners may be able to follow her into the club or hack the club's WAN, thereby being able to open the door to the basement (alternatively stealing a member's card), they need to go physically into the basement to witness the action in The Ladder, where Haley will be fighting and blending in with the corporate elite. In addition to multiple fighting events, the runners can observe a strange exchange between Haley Talbot and a male elf going by the name of Jerome Adams. From a distance they appear to be kissing, but a closer look (obtained by something like zooming in with cybereyes) shows something different and stranger; not only does the kiss lack passion, but it appears as if the two are "eating" each other. In truth they are exchanging grey nanite dust for more effective communication between the host colonies.

If runners are more action-oriented, they may not want to follow Talbot but go for a grab to interrogate her or probe her mind magically, which will eventually lead them to a NeoNET Mr. Johnson, Jerome Adams, as

her origin of infection. While a fair option, probing the mind of a CFD-infected head case, where a synthetic, inhuman intelligence has been mixed with the host's own personality, should be alien, confusing, and utterly disturbing for even the hardest of runners, resulting in a traumatic event.

PLOT POINT 3

RUNNERS VS. JOHNSON

When the runners report back to Grand Inquisitor Diasruíz about the incident in the The Ladder, she orders them to follow the elf and apprehend Talbot (if they have not done so already). They are to deliver her to a refrigerated warehouse in Little Italy, currenty used as a current black site for the S-K Innenrevision team operating in Manhattan.

Gathering information on Jerome Adams (or his multiple IDs) and tailing him will not be as simple as following Talbot. Adams is a NeoNET company man who was with the company back when it was still Fuchi America. While many people in the Manhattan shadows (and beyond) know him and some of the names he has been using over the years, they may not be willing to provide the information when the runners start inquiring during their legwork. On the contrary, due to his connection to NeoNET, a contact might even tip Adams off for favors, selling out the runners if the contact's Loyalty Rating is lower than 4. If the runners try to follow him, there is a good chance he will spot them. Although the virus has taken over most of his personality, it still has access to Adams' training as an operative. The Faux-Adams will not confront the runners directly, however. As he is an owner of a prime violet-and-black VIP resident pass, he will try to shake the runners by accessing zones, buildings, and restaurants where the runners are not able to follow. In addition he knows the city like the back of his hand and has the Home Ground (Transporter) quality. In turn, he will hire a team of local runners over his commlink to investigate and intercept the runners for interrogation using pictures of his pursuers taken by his cybereyes. The opposing runners will also get hired if Adams gets a phone tip that runners are actively looking into him. For the runner team that will oppose the player characters, gamemasters may use the stats given for Covert Ops Specialist, Occult Investigator, Face, Technomancer (pp. 113, 114, 119, and 122, *SR5*) and Burned Company Man (p. 160, *Run Faster*), or they may make up their own team of runners. How easily these runners will be able to track down the player characters depends a lot on their own current preparations and security measures when they started the run during Plot Point 1.

If the runners are getting too close to him or make an attempt to grab him, Faux-Adams tries to use the environment against them, flagging his VIP card to pit NYPD, Inc. officers patrolling neighborhoods against the runners or by shooting in the air to get himself arrested. If things look dire, he will activate an emergency beacon that will alarm a NeoNET strike team to come to his rescue (the team includes four elite corporate security team members and a lieutenant, p. 384, *SR5*, plus one combat mage, p. 116, *SR5*). If the gamemaster wants to push the envelope, Adams can make the runners' lives quite complicated. Due to a digital black book filled with connections built over decades in Manhattan, he could put a bounty on the runners' heads, hang them out to dry with regard to the Manhattan shadows, drag them into an NYPD, Inc. investigation for suspected murder or terrorism, or fabricate evidence against them. The more information he can acquire about the runners and their backgrounds (with the help of NeoNET's data banks), the more he can make their lives miserable.

If the runners hit a dead end or actively contact their Johnson, Diasruíz is willing to raise the stakes. However, as the situation between Saeder-Krupp and NeoNET is already at a breaking point, she is not willing to interfere herself actively but will supply the runners with resources (money or gear, all within reasonable limits) to capture the NeoNET Johnson and bring him in for interrogation.

When the runners have apprehended Adams, they will meet with Diasruíz at the above-mentioned black site, where they will help the grand inquisitor interrogate Adams (using a repertoire of torture techniques targeted at the CFD virus). They will learn that Adams was purposely infected with CFD by a man Diasruíz will identify as an S-K Brackhaus, operating from a S-K Prime intelligence outpost in Battery City. At that time she may reveal the background on the rogue Brackhauses (as described in the introductory piece to this chapter) and her assignment for the Innenrevision (the inquisition and her role as grand inquisitor) if the runners have been trustworthy enough. For a more dramatic turn of events, especially when the runners did not deactivate the emergency beacon or still had the other runner team on their tails, the black site may come under an attack by a NeoNET strike team during the interrogation. As a result, the runners will have to escape the building (with or without Diasruíz) and deal with Crackhaus on their own to fulfill their contract.

PLOT POINT 4

CRACKHAUS

In the finale, the runners will have to deal with the rogue Brackhaus, who has been operating out of The Palm Shop, an esoteric store in Battery City that is a front for one of many decentralized S-K Prime offices. The Crackhaus' preparedness will depend on how much mayhem the runners created when apprehending Adams, or if he had a reason and opportunity to warn Crackhaus. In the worst case, Crackhaus has

abandoned the site and fled the city, though not before leaving the runners some parting gifts for thwarting his plans (e.g., setting up the firing platforms or rigging the place for destruction—see below). If the runners have done a good job, they may able to surprise him. As long as Crackhaus is unaware of their involvement, he will be impersonating the store's original owner, Michael Lecroix, by wearing a disguise (and with the aid of the nanites that infected him). If they assault the store, he will try to make it into the basement and lock the door behind him (reinforced security door, maglock Rating 6 with anti-tampering device Rating 2) while the Palm Shop's two spirits materialize to defend the base. In the basement, protected by the Force 6 mana ward against astral intrusion and detection spells, he will equip two smart firing platforms with HK XM30s [Assault Rifle, Acc 6 (8), DV 9P, SA/BF/FA, RC 1, 30(c)] that provide an additional 5 points of recoil compensation. The platforms have an active dice pool of 9 (Device Rating 3 + Targeting Autosoft 3 + Clearsight autosoft Rating 3) and an Initiative of 6+4D6 when acting autonomously. Crackhaus will require 1 Combat Turn to ready one platform to become active at the next Combat Turn. Then he will rig the station to detonate in one minute (which takes him 1 Combat Turn) and escape via the hidden door to the tunnels.

If the runners kill or are able to capture Crackhaus alive, Diasruíz will be very pleased. They will receive the original contracted payment with a bonus of the bounties for Talbot and Evans, as well as a special group bonus of 10,000 nuyen for Crackhaus, and they may hear from the S-K Inquisition in the future for further assignments.

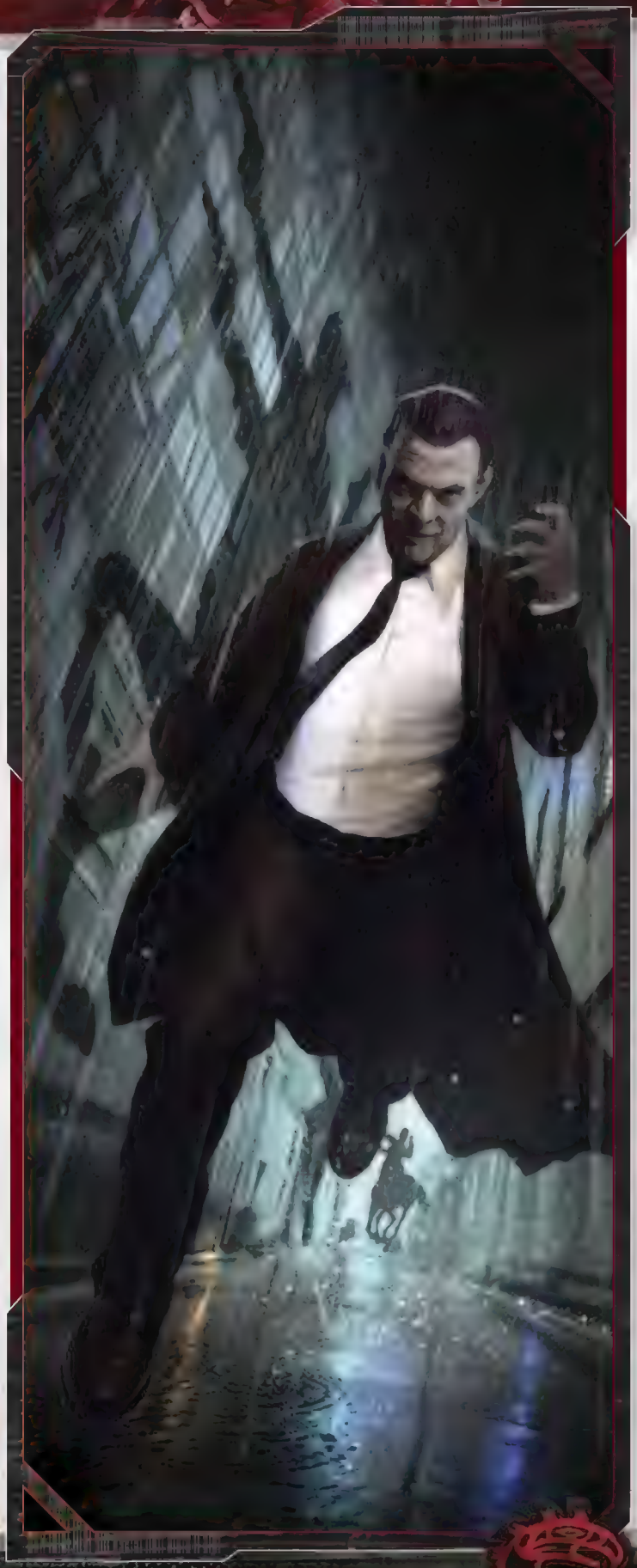
LOOSE ENDS

While the immediate threat has been neutralized with the killing, capture, or escape of Crackhaus, there may be evidence in the Palm Shop not only that Crackhaus focused his efforts on Saeder-Krupp and NeoNET and subverted these two victims, but that the infection may be more widespread and may have affected other corporations that sit on the Manhattan Development Consortium. That could lead to follow-up investigations.

LOCATIONS

ELITE-$ / THE LADDER

EElite-$ is an executive club favored by the corporate elite, of which there are many in Manhattan, for after-work drinks and to celebrate success on the frontlines of corporate battles. Founded and run by an info broker by the name of Timezone (a dwarf with a timezone biotattoo on his shaved head and a multitude of watches set to different time zones) who caters information to the local shadows, fixers, and corporate Johnsons, Elite-$ has surprising depth. Its basement



houses an underground fight club called "The Ladder," where adrenaline junkies from all of Manhattan's corporations, including lawyers, executives, and stock brokers, who are bored by their normal jobs, come to pit their skills or augmentations against each other for the thrill and the rush of a victory. It also possesses a gambling and internal ranking system of its exclusive members, hence the name. While access to the normal club is easy, as long as the runners blend in by sporting above-average designer clothing or corporate chic for the bouncers to let them pass, access to the underground fighting arena is only granted to executive members. Membership requires affiliation to a local AA corp (meaning people need a fake or real corporate SIN) and a buy-in fee of 10,000 nuyen. While the maglocked door (proximity card, Rating 3) is overwatched by a camera linked to the club's security system, there are no cameras in the basement, making it an excellent location for secret backroom deals between high-stakes rollers of different corporations.

THE PALM SHOP

While this small shop deals in palm readings, semi-occultist stuff, and psychic practices that any real magician would consider charlatanism, there is more to this store in Battery City than meets the obvious eye. In truth the shop is a front for a secret S-K Prime intelligence office like many across the globe, which is only very loosely connected to the major offices (like the one in New York) due to the decentralized structure of the organization. Originally operated by a retired BMW, later S-K, agent by the (fake) name of Michael Lecroix who used his skills to con people with psychic, angelic readings who strayed into the store out of curiosity and desperation, the whole cell (including two cybered operatives, a decker, and a mage) got killed when the Crackhaus assumed control of the safehouse. Using the cell's funds and hard-coded access into the worldwide network, the Crackhaus has used this as a den to spin his net to wreak havoc in Manhattan by pitting the largest predators of the corporate pack against each other. In addition to weaponry (firearms up to assault rifle), high-end electronics, and other gear up to the gamemaster's discretion, the lower basement is protected by a combined charged and obfuscated ward (pp. 127 and 135, Street Grimoire; Force 6), as well as by two spirits, a guardian and earth spirit (Force 6, long-term bound to defend outpost against hostile intrusion), and rigged with military-grade plastic explosives and white phosphorus to destroy all electronics and evidence, if necessary. The Palm Shop has a hidden escape that leads into the Underground.

PEOPLE

HALEY TALBOT

Haley is a twenty-seven-year-old corporate lawyer working for S-K North America. She recently cut her long blond hair short, and her normal athletic build has grown wiry. Not born into the megacorporation, she was poached by S-K headhunters even before her graduation from Stanford. They made a good offer, paying off her student debts and bringing her into the New York offices. She lived a normal corporate life with a growing career until Jerome Evans seduced and deliberately infected her with the CFD virus, after Crackhaus turned him into a head case. After suffering from a series of blackouts, Haley's own personality was finally displaced by a new one driven by self-hatred from her life as a corporate legal drone. As the plan for Haley has forced her to maintain the cover for a bigger scheme, the self-harm she inflicts on herself by body-cutting and the beatings she gets by fighting are symptoms of her borderline personality disorder inflicted by CFD.

FEMALE HUMAN

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS
3	5	3	3	4	3	4	3	2	5.8

Initiative	9 + 1D6
Condition Monitor	10 / 10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 6, Social 6
Armor	6
Skills	Electronics skill group 3, Etiquette 3 (Corporate +2), Palming 1, Perception 3, Pistols 1 (Tasers +2), Running 3, Sneaking 2, Unarmed Combat 3
Knowledge Skills	Corporate Structure 3, Saeder-Krupp Culture 4, Saeder-Krupp Leadership 3, Securities Markets 3
Languages	English N, German 3, Japanese 1
Qualities	Indomitable 1 (Mental)
CFD Infection	Matrix entity concentration 6, Nanite Volume 3
Powers	(only available when CFD personality is in control) Attribute Boost, Toxin Resistance, Adrenal Control
CFD Personality Knowledge Skills	Corporate Politics 6, Money Laundering 3, Underground Fight Clubs 3
Augmentations	Mnemonic enhancer 2
Gear	Armor clothing, commlink (Device Rating 3)
Weapons	Defiance EX Shocker [Taser, Acc 4, DV 9S(e), AP –5, SS, RC —, 4(m)]

JEROME EVANS

Jerome Evans is one of the many names that this NeoNET corporate Johnson has been using in the past decades. Already working as a troubleshooter and fixer for Fuchi North America, he moved from company man to corporate Johnson during the Novatech to NeoNET transition period and is quite entrenched in Manhattan's shadows, corporate and socialite circles, and underground. While officially holding an office in the NeoNET Malmstein building in Midtown for his position as a marketing strategist, he acts as one of the long arms of MDC rep Emma Porter and other high-ranking NeoNET executives when a team of runners needs to be assembled to solve a problem, acquire particular data, or extract a person. Due to his deep connection in Manhattan, he was targeted by Crackhaus and infected with a high load of the virus. After realizing what was happening to him, he sought treatments like blue goo at local shadow clinics to stop the progress, but the treatments only accelerated the process. Since he has succumbed to the virus, the emerging Faux-Evans has assumed the life of his former host. While he plays his parts in the Crackhaus' plans for his own gains, his hatred against NeoNET vanished during the merge, along with the devotion of his former host. That doesn't mean he has become a bad worker—an individual with a complete lack of empathy and hunger for personal power (basically a sociopath) could do Evans' job quite well—and nobody has noticed the change yet.

MALE ELF

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS
4	6 (10)	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Initiative	11 + 1D6
Condition Monitor	10 / 11
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 8, Social 7 (11)
Armor	12
Skills	Athletics skill group 5, Automotive Mechanic 3, Con 8, Electronics skill group 5, Electronic Warfare 4 (Jamming +2), Etiquette 5 (Corporate +2), Exotic Melee Weapon (Monofilament Whip) 5, Instruction 4, Intimidation 5 (Mental +2), Leadership 5, Palming 3, Perception 4, Pilot Ground Craft 6, Pistol 4, Sneaking 3 (Urban +2), Unarmed Combat 3
Qualities	Analytical Mind, Home Ground (The Transporter, New York City)
Augmentations	Commlink (Device Rating 4), control rig 1 [alphaware], datajack, datalock (Rating 8), mnemonic enhancer 3, muscle toner 4, pain editor, skilljack 3, tailored pheromones 3 [+3 dice pool modifier to Acting and Influence Skill Groups when in close distance], tooth compartment
Gear	AR gloves, autopicker 6, biometric reader, camera [w/ low-light vision, vision enhancement 3, vision magnification], earbuds [Capacity 3, w/ select sound filter 3], executive suit [w/ non-conductivity Rating 4], glasses [Capacity 4, w/ flare compensation, image link, low-light vision, smartlink], maglock passkey 4, Manhattan VIP Resident Pass
Weapons	Ares Light Fire 75 [Light Pistol, Acc 6 (8), DV 6P, AP —, SA, RC —, 16 (c)] Monofilament whip [Acc 5 (7), Reach 2, DV 12P, AP –8] Shock gloves [Acc Physical, Reach —, DV 8S(e), AP –5]

BASIMA ORIOL DIASRUÍZ

Basima Oriol Diasruíz is Iraqi with Spanish roots. She was born in 2042 as daughter to a Spanish geologist and an Iraqi programmer working for Fatima Petrochemicals, and she spent most of her adolescence in the S-K arcology in Baghdad. When she turned sixteen, she started her education as a corporate spider, where she received paramilitary training as part of corporate security instruction. While working officially as a network spider in the Baghdad S-K grid before Crash 2.0, she was internally recruited by S-K Prime and used for Matrix sabotage operations in the Middle East before getting trained in espionage tactics, infiltration, armed combat, and close combat to become one of the Awrahs (which is a fictional identity used by a group of female Saeder-Krupp agents operating in North Africa and the Middle East using the disguise of an unremarkable Islamic woman wearing a hijab or comparable concealing traditional garments). After her Emergence, Diasruíz was transferred to the arcology in Dubai, where she handled Matrix security for the head of the S-K Middle East division, Reza Bakr. After the destruction of the arcology by the great dragon Hestaby, she was moved to Neu-Essen, where she officially worked as a section head for Matrix security, but in truth worked for S-K Prime SIGINT, until she got promoted to Grand Inquisitor. Lofwyr and Vogen, to whom she directly reports, tasked her with purging head cases from the megacorporation and vetting crucial stakeholders within upper management of the corporation due to her special ability, an assignment to which she is fully committed. Within Saeder-Krupp (and at times she is not on combat operations), Basima Oriol Diasruíz is known for her distinct fashion style, an amalgamation of a female European corporate chic with neo-Arabian influences, which she cultivated after coming to Neu-Essen.

FEMALE HUMAN

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4.1

Initiative	8 (10) + 1D6
Condition Monitor	10 / 11
Limits	Physical 5 (6), Mental 7, Social 8
Armor	6
Skills	Automatics 3, Con 3, Electronics skill group 2, Etiquette 5 (Corporate +2), First Aid 2, Intimidation 4, Navigation 2, Negotiation 5, Palming 3, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Pistols 5, Sneaking 5, Tracking 4, Unarmed Combat 4
Qualities	Analytical Mind, Home Ground (The Transporter, New York City), Quick Healer
Augmentations	Commlink (Device Rating 6), datajack, mnemonic enhancer 3, reaction enhancers 2, tailored pheromones 2 [+2 dice pool modifier to Acting and Influence Skill Groups when in close distance]
Gear	Armor clothing, jammer (area, Rating 6), maglock passkey 5, Manhattan VIP Resident Pass
Weapons	Ares Light Fire 75 [Light Pistol, Acc 6 (8), DV 6P, AP —, SA, RC —, 16 (c)]

HANS CRACKHAUS

This installation of the Crackhaus became infected with the virus during a mission for Saeder-Krupp Prime somewhere in North America during the early '70s. Highly augmented with cybernetics and nanoware and exposed to a high volume of nanites, this Brackhaus succumbed easily to the dominating influence of the synthetic intelligence that was driven by hatred of the corporate captors that imprisoned it. Exposed to a host whose original personality already had been diluted by countless undercover identities before assuming the Brackhaus identity in service of his corporate master, the virus created a cross-breed of a head case with Conniver and Manipulator elements (see p. 17, *Stolen Souls*). Being caught in the mind of a very resourceful corporate puppet, Hans Crackhaus made use of the Brackhaus' identity, spreading mayhem and killing across the UCAS and NAN in the name of Saeder-Krupp before he decided to up the ante by pitting his former employer and NeoNET, toward whom he has a subconscious antipathy, against each other. Since he killed a S-K Prime cell and took over their safe house without anyone noticing, he has been using S-K Prime resources to instigate the conflict from his side while employing a local NeoNET Johnson to work and manipulate the other side.

HUMAN MALE

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS
4 (6)	3 (5)	5 (7)	4	5	5 (6)	6	6	2	1.74

Initiative	11 (13) + 3D6
Condition Monitor	10 (11) /11
Limits	Physical 6 (7), Mental 7 (8), Social 6 (7)
Armor	14
Skills	Athletics skill group 4, Con 8, Disguise 7, Electronics skill group 4, Electronic Warfare 5 (Encryption +2), Etiquette 10 (Corporate +2), Forgery 4, Impersonation 6, Intimidation 7 (Mental +2), Leadership 5, Negotiation 6 (Bargaining +2), Palming 4, Perception 6, Pilot Ground Craft 4, Pistols 7 (Hold-outs +2), Unarmed Combat 4 (Block +2), any active skillsoft selected by the gamemaster
Knowledge Skills	Corporate Politics 6, Psychology 5, Runner Hideouts 6, Saeder-Krupp 6, SOTA Technology 6
Languages	English 5, German N
Qualities	Assassin's Creed (Out for Myself), Blandness, Murky Link, Photographic Memory
CFD Infection	Matrix entity concentration 10, Nanite Volume 6
Powers	(available at all times, as CFD personality has assumed total control) Attribute Boost, Toxin Resistance, Adrenal Control
Augmentations	Bone density augmentation 2, cerebral booster 1 (alphaware), datajack (betaware), fingertip compartment (betaware), muscle toner 2 (alphaware), olfactory booster 6 (betaware), orthoskin 2, platelet factories, skilljack (Rating 6, betaware), skillwires (Rating 5, betaware), shock hand (betaware), synaptic booster 2 (alphaware), Nanite hive [subverted by CFD]
Gear	Earbuds [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement 3, fake SIN [Rating 6 w/ concealed carry license (Rating 6)], jazz (two doses), linguasofts (Afrikaans, Cantonese, French, Italian, Japanese, Orz'et, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Sperethiel, all Rating 5), commlink [Hermes Ikon, Device Rating 5], monocle [Capacity 4, w/ low-light vision, flare compensation, image link, smartlink], Mortimer of London Argentum [chemical protection (Rating 4), insulation (Rating 4), and nonconductivity (Rating 6); +1 for Social Test when wirelessly connected], omni-directional microphone (w/selective sound filter and audio enhancement Rating 3), psyche (two doses), white noise generator
Weapons	Fichetti Tiffani Self-Defender 2075 [Hold-out, Acc 4, DV 4S(e), AP –5, SS, RC —, 4(c), w/ concealable holster, smartgun, and stick-n-shock ammo] Ruger Super Warhawk [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5, DV 9P, AP –6, SS, RC —, 6(cy) w/ concealable holster, smartgun, and APDS ammo] Shock hand [Reach —, DV 9S(e), AP –5] Walther Palm Pistol [Hold-out, Acc 4, DV 7P, AP —, SS/BF, RC —, 2(b), w/ smartgun system, neuro-stun X capsule rounds (Power 15, Speed: 1 Combat Turn, Penetration: –2, Disorientation, Stun Damage)]

For details on head case powers and stats, see p. 195, *Stolen Souls*.

LINGERING FALLOUT

Covert Trideo Recording, Astral Space Preservation Society Board of Directors, taken February 3, 2077

Executive Director Ibu Air: Ladies and gentlemen of the board. As we have discussed over the last six months, the foundation has been experiencing severe financial hardships. Last fiscal year, we were nearly one hundred million nuyen in debt. Things have not improved for us this year. In this first quarter alone, we are projecting another loss of 32.6 million nuyen. At this rate, we'll end 2077 with another projected 130 million nuyen loss. We are in dire straits, ladies and gentlemen, and we must do something to right this ship now.

Board Member Alexandria Hart: Have we not made a greater effort in our fundraising work?

Board Member Roberta Glazer: We have, but without Lady Hestaby's visible presence supporting us, many donors whom we used to count on no longer seem motivated to continue their giving. We lack a certain esteem in their eyes. Our causes are no longer attractive or sexy to them. And some of those who genuinely believed in our mission have passed away, and the heirs who inherited their fortunes do not hold the same passions.

Board Member Joshua Graves: You mean they no longer see us as easy access to a great dragon and her vast horde for potential investment opportunities, so they're moving onto greener pastures. Sycophants and hypocrites. All of them. We simply have to try harder to find new donors. We are highly esteemed and reputable experts on astral space and its denizens. We rival even the Draco Foundation and the DIMR in our expertise and our standing in academia. We have cleaned up dozens of toxic waste sites, and have cleansed hundreds of kilometers of tainted wilderness. Our actions matter. We must find a way to live on; to honor the desires and wishes of the late Dunkelzahn himself.

Board Member Andrew Russell: Have we tried reaching out to other great dragons for their support? Celedyr, the new Loremaster? Lung?

Ibu Air: I have personally taken on that responsibility, contacting the other great dragons. I am saddened to report no one would see me. Lady Hestaby fell out of grace with her kind and was banished from their society. That taint lingers on her close allies and associates. Not to mention we are the legacy of another great dragon. It is my opinion no other great dragon will lift a talon to aid us. They would rather us wither and die than be associated with us.

Board Member Patricia Loveland: How about Rhonabwy? Or Masaru? They were Hestaby's allies. I wouldn't think they would have any trouble being associated with an organization that was once associated with her.

Ibu Air: As far as I understand, in their form of politics, she's an outcast. And with the Dragon Civil War so fresh in their memories, I'm certain neither one of them wants to take such a provocative gesture as being associated with something that she was involved in. So we can't count on their benevolence to bail us out. However, two proposals have come in that might solve our problems. Unfortunately, they're both buyout offers.

Graves: You can't be serious. It took years for the Astral Space Preservation Society to become independent. And now you're suggesting we just give that up?

Ibu Air: Sadly, in our current predicament, everything has to be on the table. We have made every effort to improve our funds through normal means, and yet donors remain uninterested. It's either we consider these proposals or shutter the foundation. Perhaps we can limp along for a little bit longer, but I don't see our fortunes changing dramatically for the better in the near-term, not without doing something radical.

Board Member Josephine Reinhardt: So who are our would-be suitors?

Ibu Air: One offer has come in from Wuxing. The other is from the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research.

Graves: The DIMR? Are you serious? They never wanted us to begin with! I wasn't on the board when the Astral Space Preservation Society was formed, but I was a researcher then. I heard all the stories of how we were the red-headed stepchild that neither the DIMR nor the Draco Foundation ever wanted. I knew they were obligated to found this institution, nothing more. And they treated us exactly like that; as an obligation. I remember how they took all the credit for our hard work. I remember all the things they expected us to do on a shoestring budget. No way, I'm sorry, but I don't trust them. They want to simply pilfer away our finest talent and gain access to our research to

advance their own. If we go with them, we'll be a mere shadow of what we once were.

Ibu Air: I appreciate your feelings on this matter. And I am certain there are a few others on this board who feel the same way. But I would ask that each of you take the time to review and seriously consider the proposals each entity has put forth. The most important thing here is not ego, it is ensuring the important work of the foundation continues, and which organization may allow that work to continue as unfettered as possible. If there are any here who may find a way to allow the foundation to survive without going this route, please bring forth those ideas. We'll consider them, and if they have merit, perhaps we can put off selling to these outside interests for a while longer, to see if we can get the foundation back to being financially solvent.

End recording

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Astral Space Preservation Society (ASPS) is an organization that was originally founded by the Draco Foundation and the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research at the bequest of the late great dragon, Dunkelzahn, to study and help protect astral space and its denizens, and to build partnerships between free spirits and metahumanity. Immediately following its founding, the ASPS went through numerous executive directors and board members, and it was eventually forced to fight for its survival against the two organizations that gave birth to it, organizations that never acted as if they really wanted it to exist in the first place. Eventually, with the assistance of a free spirit, Ibu Air, and another great dragon, Hestaby, the Astral Space Preservation Society broke free from these much larger organizations and became an independent foundation. And under the generous financial support of Hestaby and the leadership of Ibu Air, the Astral Space Preservation Society flourished, receiving dozens of academic accolades and becoming one of the world's leading authorities in the world on astral phenomena. Often, the ASPS outshone both the Draco Foundation and the DIMR in this field of study.

However, things took a turn for the worse in the aftermath of the Dragon Civil War. Three of the Astral Space Preservation Society's directors were killed when the Shasta Shamans, the magic group to which the board members belonged, were wiped out during the conflict. Two of them were not at the Shasta Lodge when the magic group was attacked, but they were still hunted down and killed. The bigger ramification of the Dragon Civil War for the ASPS was that it forced Hestaby out of her lair and denied her access to her hoard, which was taken from her and divided among the other dragons. Without Hestaby's financial contributions, the ASPS has begun to flounder, to the point that it has once again been put in dire financial straits. At this time, the ASPS has two choices: to continue to struggle on its own in the effort to find private funding sources that could make up for the loss of a great dragon backer, or to sell out to another organization or corporation. There are currently two bids on the table for the ASPS: one from the Wuxing megacorporation, and the other from the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research. Both groups would love to get their hands on the experts and the research the Astral Space Preservation Society has been conducting over the last two decades.

The way it stands now, before the final vote, there are five board members leaning not to sell, forcing the ASPS to go it alone to make it solvent again on their own terms. Four members of the board are leaning to sell the institution to Wuxing and to take the ASPS in an entirely new direction, while the final three members of the board are determined to sell the institution back to the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research. The final vote on this matter will take place two weeks after the player characters are hired, giving them two weeks to alter the vote.

In this adventure, the runners will be working for Wuxing to manipulate the votes of the ASPS board so that their bid for the institution is accepted. By the end of this adventure, the Astral Space Preservation Society will become a part of the Wuxing megacorporation.

PLOT POINT 1

THE MEET

The player characters will be hired by Wuxing to manipulate an upcoming vote by the board of the Astral Space Preservation Society (ASPS) to ensure its sale to their megacorporation.

Wuxing may contact their fixers, or if the characters have magic-based connections, such as talismongers, Wuxing may approach the runners through those contacts instead.

When the player characters meet with Ms. Johnson, she explains that it is Wuxing's desire to acquire the Astral Space Preservation Society and make it one of their subsidiaries. To accomplish this, the runners need to manipulate the vote so that it goes in Wuxing's favor. Ms. Johnson warns the runners that the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research is also hiring runners to influence the vote, so they will have competition. According to Ms. Johnson, there are four board members whose votes are considered soft and are in play: Dr. Andrew Russell, Dr. Aaron Guerriero, Dr. Roberta Glazer, and Dr. Patricia Loveland. Dr. Russell and Dr. Glazer are currently favoring not selling the foundation to anyone but could be persuaded to vote for the Wuxing proposal, while Dr. Loveland and Dr. Guerriero are considering voting to allow the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research to buy out the ASPS, though their stances are also not firm. The other eight votes on the board are not considered in play, and the runners are told they should not waste their time with these board members. The runners are tasked with approaching each board member individually and convincing them to vote for Wuxing's proposal. The player characters will be authorized to use a wide variety of tactics to get the board members of the ASPS to vote in Wuxing's favor, including bribery, intimidation, and blackmail. Ms. Johnson will provide funds for bribes if necessary. As a last resort, Ms. Johnson tells them they can make the board member give their proxy vote to another board member they trust to vote in Wuxing's favor, and the runners can then eliminate that stubborn board member. However, the runners may only do that once; any more than that will cause the rest of the board to suspect tampering and postpone the vote, perhaps indefinitely.

Two of the board members live in Atlanta, CAS (Russell, Glazer). The other two live in Manhattan, in the UCAS (Guerriero, Loveland). Ms. Johnson is open to paying for travel expenses, as the runners will have to go back and forth between the UCAS and the CAS. Her initial offer is 7,000 nuyen per runner. The team's face may make a Negotiation + Charisma [Social] Opposed Test versus a dice pool of 14 to increase the offer by 1,000 nuyen per net hit up to a maximum of 15,000 nuyen per runner.

PLOT POINT 2

ROBERTA GLAZER—ATLANTA

The runners may choose to approach the board members in any order. They will likely choose to approach the two board members in the same city first before moving on to the second city and its set of Astral Space Preservation Society board members.

Doctor Roberta Glazer lives in Atlanta. Information from Wuxing intelligence lets the player characters know that Doctor Glazer is not in favor of selling the foundation to either organization, but they believe they could make her see the value in their proposal. They want the players to emphasize the generous severance package that Wuxing is offering to the board of directors (five million nuyen each), discounted health coverage with Wuxing for the next ten years, and the possibility of being brought back on board as a consultant with generous fees of up to one hundred thousand nuyen annually.

Getting to Glazer will not be easy. She has a security staff of four highly trained bodyguards and will not meet with the likes of shadowrunners. She is very much prejudiced against people she believes come from a lower class. To get an audience with Glazer, the team has to force the issue, such as hijacking her vehicle and bringing her to them, breaking into her house (which is full of Rating 6 security devices), or intercepting her at a restaurant. Even if they force a meeting with Glazer and get past her security, she still has a bound Force 6 great form plant spirit that can cause problems for shadowrunners. And even when the runners finally make Glazer sit down and talk to them, she should be considered prejudiced for all Social Tests (-2 dice pool modifier), unless the runners took the necessary step of disguising themselves as members of the upper class (such as wearing more expensive clothes, driving vehicles that are considered status symbols, or even forging fake SINs that show they are corporate-born citizens). If the runners are successful in their negotiations, they will finally convince Glazer to vote for Wuxing, provided, in addition to all the perks she would receive normally, that she also receives an additional bonus in the amount of two million nuyen. Conferring with their Johnson, player characters will learn that Ms. Johnson has been authorized to make the arrangements to pay off Glazer.

Once this is done, she should be considered bought off, and her vote is with Wuxing. However, things are never that easy in the shadows. Once the player characters have moved on to negotiate with another board member, Wuxing intelligence learns that the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research has paid Glazer a visit as well and paid her five million nuyen to switch her vote in their favor. Ms. Johnson has little patience for those who would double-cross her and try to play both sides, so she instructs the runners not to play nice with her. They are authorized to do anything in their power to make her betray her word to the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research, including physical intimidation or kidnapping a family member. Glazer has a husband that she is particularly close to, as well as two adult sons and a daughter, along with four grandchildren. Kidnapping and holding any of these family members will be enough to persuade Glazer to honor her initial arrangement with Wuxing. And finally, once Glazer has voted in favor of Wuxing, Ms. Johnson instructs the runners to attempt to steal certified credsticks or other goods from Glazer that can help repay the two million nuyen bribe she received. In Ms. Johnson's opinion, Glazer lost the right to that nuyen when she went back on her word. Ms. Johnson leaves it up to the runners if they want to release the family member unharmed or if they want to kill the family member as retaliation. However, killing the

family member may earn the player characters a powerful enemy in the future.

If the runners try to intimidate Glazer by holding one of her family members, the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research hires a runner team to try to rescue the hostage on Glazer's behalf, so the player characters will need to be on the lookout for an attempted hostage rescue.

PLOT POINT 3

AARON GUERRIERO—MANHATTAN

The biggest obstacle to getting to the board members living in Manhattan is navigating the highly restricted and heavily monitored sprawl. Almost all of Manhattan is monitored by a sophisticated wireless security mesh to protect the powerful, elite class, and if the player characters do not have the right passes or good enough fake SINs, they will encounter NYPD Incorporated, Knight Errant, or Winter Systems breathing down their necks, looking to knock around some SINless metahumans. Doctor Guerriero lives in the Lower Westside, in a single-A security zone protected by Winter Systems. (For more information on running in Manhattan, see p. 98, *Stolen Souls*.)

Data provided by Wuxing Intelligence suggests a possible way to get to Doctor Guerriero: blackmail. For the past twelve years, Doctor Guerriero has been making unexplained withdrawals from his bank accounts and has been paying someone hush money. If the runners track down where this money is going, and uncovers who is blackmailing Guerriero, they can use it to sway his vote.

If they investigate Doctor Guerriero's history, the player characters will learn that he had an extramarital affair that resulted in two illegitimate children, children Guerriero's wife knows nothing about. Extramarital affairs are common in 2076, so that it is not much of a scandal. But in Guerriero's haste to be married to his wife, he did not get around to developing a prenuptial agreement. A messy divorce without a prenuptial agreement could result in the Astral Space Preservation Society's board member losing millions of nuyen in alimony. So Guerriero has chosen instead to pay hush money to his former lover, to keep her quiet and maintain a decent lifestyle for the children. Ms. Johnson warns the runners that if they come across this blackmail material, this information is meant to only be used by Wuxing, and they may not use it to blackmail Guerriero themselves. If they do, they may find Wuxing sending out a wetwork team to eliminate the double-crossing runner team.

PLOT POINT 4

PATRICIA LOVELAND—MANHATTAN

Perhaps the most difficult board member for the player characters to deal with will be Patricia Loveland. Although Wuxing Intelligence believes Loveland's vote on the board is in play, in reality, it is not. She decided a few hours after the initial board meeting that she will vote in favor of the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research's proposal, and nothing will change that decision. Loveland should be considered hostile for any Social Tests (-3 dice pool modifier) the player characters make against her. Dr. Loveland does not have immediate family that can be used to leverage her. Physical intimidation will not work (at least not right away), nor will bribery. The player characters may consider asking Ms. Johnson to see if they really need to bother swinging this vote, and Ms. Johnson's reply will be yes, that they have to do something about this vote so it goes in favor of Wuxing. With only a twelve-member board of directors, one vote may make all the difference.

If the player characters need an option to pursue, magical compulsion might be one. But Ms. Johnson recommends coercing Doctor Loveland into giving her vote to another board member that they currently control, and then allowing them to vote for her as her proxy vote. Breaking Loveland enough through physical coercion to force her to sign away her vote will take days, and if the player characters leave her to the very last, they may not have enough time. Alternately, the runners could kidnap Loveland and forge documents passing her proxy to another board member. AAny player with the Forgery skill may make an Forgery + Logic [Mental] (18, 1 hour) Extended Test to forge the documents, or they may have their contacts do it for them.

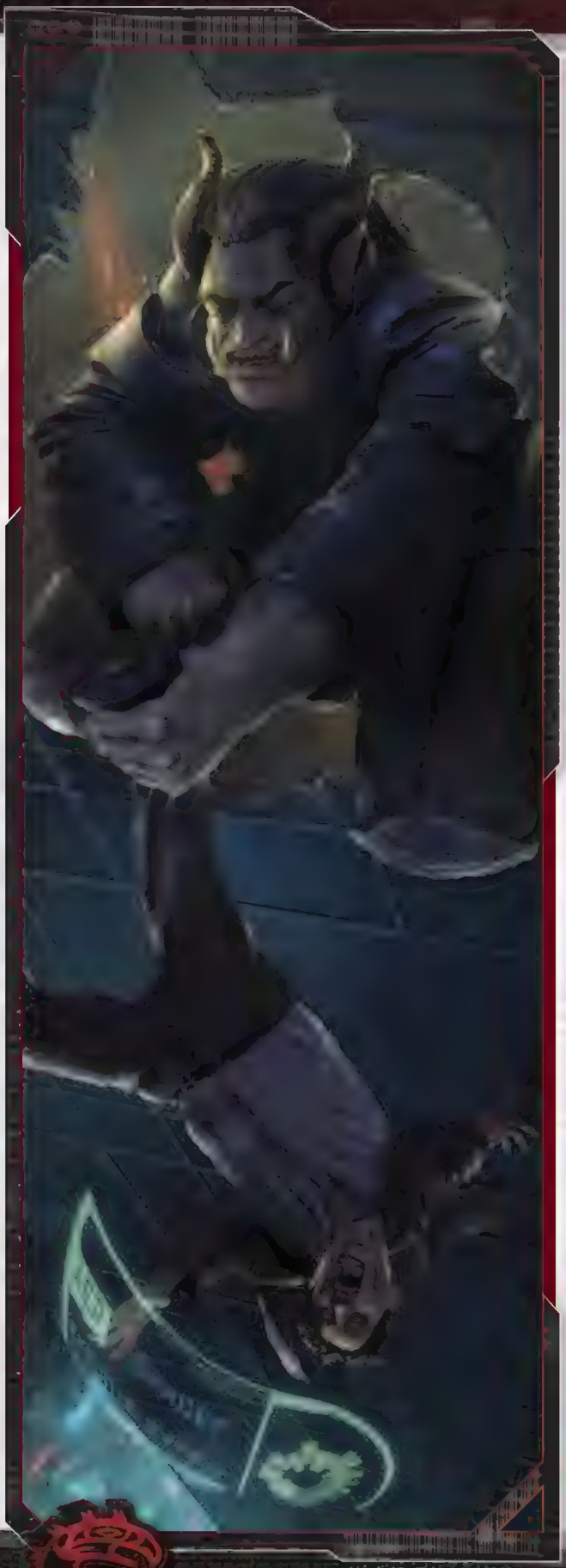
Ms. Johnson suggests the runners hold on to Doctor Loveland until the vote in case anything goes wrong. After that, the runners will be authorized to dispose of Doctor Loveland (or alter her memories and let her go). If the runners are forced to hang onto Doctor Loveland for more than twenty-four hours, the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research learns of Loveland's situation and sends in a runner team to try to free her. It is imperative to Wuxing's interests that such an action from the DIMR is not successful.

As an alternative plan, the runners may kill Loveland before the vote. However, they will need to forge documents showing she authorized another board member to vote as her proxy.

PLOT POINT 5

ANDREVV RUSSELL—ATLANTA

Intelligence provided to the runners by Wuxing on Doctor Andrew Russell suggests that he suffers from a severe gambling addiction. He, like the Astral Space Preservation Society, is under a lot of red ink. Recently, Dr. Russell had to downsize, moving from an AAA security rated neighborhood to a single-A neighborhood. Wuxing Intelligence believes that if you give him enough nuyen to save him from his debts and keep him in his accustomed lifestyle, Doctor Russell will then gratefully vote for Wuxing's proposal. When the runners get to Doctor Russell, they will learn that they are the first ones to reach him,



and he is willing to sell his vote for an additional five million nuyen. But there is a caveat. For the past four years, Doctor Russell has been embezzling from the Astral Space Preservation Society, taking just over two million nuyen to feed his gambling habit. He does not wish this evidence to survive and hang over his head.

There is also some urgency to this matter. Internal security for the Astral Space Preservation Society has detected irregularities in their financial accounts and has started an investigation. If the investigation is successful before the vote occurs, he will be removed from the Board of Directors, and his vote won't matter. The runners need to either delay the investigation until after the vote is made, or (as Russell would prefer) make the investigation disappear. That could involve doing something to the investigators, or making the evidence in the matter disappear—whatever it takes to make the inquiry go away. Once the runners agree to help Doctor Russell cover up his malfeasance within the foundation, he will no longer be receptive to any offers made by the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research. After all, Doctor Russell feels that the fewer who know his secrets, the better. It will be up to the gamemaster to decide if that paranoia to protect his dark secrets will extend into having Doctor Russell use some of the bribe money he's taken from Wuxing to hire shadowrunners to try to eliminate the player characters for knowing too much about him.

When the final vote is taken, the vote tally should look something like this: seven votes to support selling the Astral Space Preservation Society to Wuxing, four votes to support selling the foundation to the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research, and one vote not to sell.

CHARACTERS

ROBERTA GLAZER (HUMAN)

Roberta Glazer is a human woman in her late 60s who has been on the board of the Astral Space Preservation Society for the past eight years. Glazer is an established magic-user within academic circles and has been published in a number of academic journals. She is arrogant and prejudiced against those she feels are beneath her. She has a personal security detail on her at all times, consisting of four cybered bodyguards. Glazer is an expert in the field of astral space research and identifying and combating dangerous background counts.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG	M
4	4	5	5	6	6	4	6	6	3	6

Initiative	7 + 1D6
Astral Initiative	8 + 3D6
Condition Monitor	10 / 11
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 8, Social 8
Armor	8
Skills	Arcana 8, Assensing 5, Banishing 7 (Toxic Spirits +2), Binding 8 (Plant Spirits +2), Etiquette 8, Negotiation 7, Perception 6, Sorcery skill group 5, Summoning 8 (Plant Spirits +2),
Qualities	Magician (Aztex tradition), Prejudiced (lower socio-economic classes), Spirit Affinity (plant spirits)
Initiate Grade	3
Metamagics	Cleansing, Invoking, Shielding
Spells	Analyze Magic, Blast, Clean [Air], Clean [Earth], Clean [Water], Detect Enemies (Extended), Detect Magic (Extended), Heal, Shape [Earth], Stunbolt
Bound Spirits	Plant spirit (great form, Force 6)
Gear	Armanté Dress [8], commlink

AARON GUERRIERO (DWARF)

Aaron Guerriero is a UCAS citizen who is a graduate from MIT&T (class of 2061). The dwarf is thirty-nine years old, and is the youngest member on Astral Space Preservation Society's board of directors. Guerriero is believed to be happily married, but that is not the case. He carried out an extramarital affair twelve years ago that resulted in two illegitimate children, and he is eager to keep that a secret. Guerriero is a leading expert on free spirits for the ASPS, and he is also an enchanter.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG	M
5	4	3	6	6	4	4	4	6	1	6

Initiative	7 + 1D6
Astral Initiative	8 + 3D6
Condition Monitor	11 / 11
Limits	Physical 7, Mental 6, Social 7
Armor	9
Skills	Alchemy 7, Arcana 5, Armorer 4, Artificing 7, Assensing 8, Astral Combat 8, Blades 6, Banishing 4, Counterspelling 6, Etiquette 4, Negotiations 6, Perception 5, Spellcasting 5, Summoning 6
Qualities	Magician
Spells	Astral Armor, Destroy Free Spirit, Detect Magic (Extended), Mana Bind, Mana Net, Spirit Barrier
Gear	1 x Force 6 weapon focus (katana), Berwick Suit [9], commlink (Device Rating 5)
Weapons	Katana [Blade, Acc 7, Reach 1, DV 9P, AP –3]

PATRICIA LOVELAND (TROLL)

Dr. Patricia Loveland has been with the Astral Space Preservation Society since 2066. Loveland is forty-two years old, and she can be quite stubborn when her mind is made up. On multiple occasions, she has gotten into heated arguments with her fellow board members. She is also one of the Astral Space Preservation Society's experts on shedim.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG	M
7	4	3	6	7	4	3	3	6	4	6

Initiative	6 + 1D6
Astral Initiative	12 + 3D6
Condition Monitor	12 / 12
Limits	Physical 8, Mental 6 , Social 7
Armor	9
Skills	Arcana 6, Assensing 5, Astral Combat 8, Banishing 4, Binding 4, Blades 6, Counterspelling 8, Etiquette 5, Intimidation 6, Negotiation 6, Perception 5, Pistols 5, Spellcasting 8, Summoning 8
Qualities	Exceptional Attribute (Willpower), High Pain Tolerance 3, Mentor Spirit (Mountain), Will to Live 3
Spells	Death Touch, Fireball, Heal, Resist Pain, Stunbolt
Bound Spirits	2 x spirits of man (Force 5), 1 x spirit of air (Force 6)
Gear	1 x binding focus (Force 4), commlink, Synergist Business Line [9]
Weapons	Fichetti Tiffani Needler [Hold-out Pistol, Acc 5, DV 8P(f), AP +5, RC —, 4(c)]

ANDREW RUSSELL (HUMAN)

Andrew Russell is a forty-nine-year-old researcher with the Astral Space Preservation Society, specializing in the identification, study, and eradication of insect spirits. He is a powerful mystic adept, which gives him a number of options to use when tracking down his prey.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG	M
5	6	6	5	5	6	4	5	6	1	6

Initiative	10 + 1D6
Astral Initiative	6 + 3D6
Condition Monitor	11 / 11
Limits	Physical 8, Mental 6 , Social 7
Armor	6 (10)
Skills	Arcana 5, Assensing 7, Astral Combat 8, Blades 5, Con 6, Counterspelling 7, Etiquette 6, Perception 6, Spellcasting 6
Qualities	Addiction (Gambling, Severe), Analytical Mind, Mystic Adept
Initiate Grade	2
Metamagics	Adept Centering, Masking
Adept Powers	Analytics (1), Astral Perception (1), Critical Strike (0.5), Killing Hands (0.5), Mystic Armor (2), Spell Resistance (2), Spirit Ram (1)
Spells	Astral Armor, Destroy [Free Spirit], Heal, Insecticide, Manaball, Mana Barrier, Manabolt, Translate
Gear	1 x weapon focus [Cougar Fineblade (long blade), Force 6], commlink, Second Skin [6]
Weapons	Cougar Fineblade (long blade) [Blade, Acc 6, DV 8P, AP –1]

BODYGUARDS (HUMANS)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
6 (+3)	6	5 (8)	5	4	4	4	3	3.76

Initiative	9 (12) + 1D6
Condition Monitor	11 / 10
Limits	Physical 7 (8), Mental 6, Social 5
Armor	8 (11)
Skills	Automatics 8 (+1), Blades 5, Clubs 6, Escape Artist 4, Perception 6 (Searching +2), Sneak 5, Throwing Weapons 5, Unarmed Combat 7 (Martial Arts, Jujitsu, w/Called Shot (Disarm), Chin Na, and Sweep techniques +2)
Knowledge Skills	Small Unit Tactics 8
Qualities	Sharpshooter
Augmentations	(All betaware) Bone lacing (Titanium), cybereyes [Rating 4, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision, ocular drone, smartlink, vision enhancement 3], cyberears [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement 3, damper], reaction enhancers 3
Gear	Novatech Tactician Personal Integrated Tactical Network (+1 to Automatics skill), Hold Fast adhesive spray, form-fitting body armor (full suit) [8]
Weapons	Ingram Smartgun X [SMG, Acc 4(6), DV 6S(e), AP –5, RC 2, 32(c), w/ stick-n-shock ammo, gas-vent 2 system, smartgun system, integral sound suppressor] Stun baton [Club, Acc 4, Reach 1, DV 9S(e), AP –5] Combat knife [Blade, Acc 6, 7P, AP –3] Flash bang [Grenade, 10S, AP –4, Blast Radius 10 m]

SERVED COLD

HEAT ON THE BEAT

POSTED BY: DARKSTAR

Thanks for letting me drop these files here for everyone. I've been keeping an eye on most of the security corporations for going on two decades, and while I'll admit even I was surprised by Knight Errant's bold moves snatching several lucrative municipal contracts out of Lone Star's hand, I've been paying close attention ever since; keeping an eye out for anything that even hints at leading up to more shadow-shaking events. The latest moves look like delayed revenge on the part of the tin stars, meant to kick the pawns off their thrones. Be wary of the work you pick up these days. If it looks like you'll be doing shadow ops for the boys in blue, hold out for extra hazard pay.

To: Detective Nicholas Freet, KESIG
From: Officer Greg Thoss, KESO
Subject: Higgin case

Det. Freet,

As requested, the information regarding the violence committed against the subject has been carefully handled. My partner and I have made sure to locate all copies of the recordings that were leaked to the news service, and we have fully canvased the area where the film was taken to assure no other recordings were made by other inquisitive parties.

Your appreciation is welcomed, and we would like to invite you out to dinner. Stratelli's makes a fantastic rigatoni. 1900 hours Friday?

-Off. Thoss

To: Officer Greg Thoss, KESO
From: Detective Nicholas Freet, KESIG
Subject: Re: Higgin case

Greg,

I'm not sure what you're referring to. The only Higgin case I have involves a team of runners shooting up a Stuffer Shack. Higgin was hit in the crossfire. Are you sure you have the right case reference?

As for dinner, why not? I haven't been out to your neck of the woods in ages. I'll see you and Brett at 1900.

-Dan

To: Sergeant Elan Strikter
From: <<<<Sender Error>>>>
Subject: Work

Sgt. Strikter,

The assets you sent to cancel my corporate contract have been retired. The data I have pointing back at you is conclusive, and the trail to it was easier to follow than a neon sign in Redmond. Thus, I think this is a setup. I know we've failed to meet eye to eye in the past but I'm certain that you are not that sloppy when it comes to your clean-up work. Find a way to reassure me of our relationship status within five days, or I will take that to mean our contract and previous agreements are null and void and open my services to other contract suppliers in the city.

-Ash

To: TheAshFarm
From: Sergeant Elan Striker
Subject: Re: Work

Ash,

It was all me. Suck it, you shadowrunning bottom-feeder.

-Elan

BACKGROUND

Ever since Lone Star lost their fat law enforcement and security contract with Seattle Metroplex back in '72, they have been on the defensive against other security corps looking to take more of their municipal contracts. Lone Star fought off most challengers, but they lost some cities. They spent 2075 and '76 rebuilding and are set on making '77 their year.

They're looking to get their contracts back and feel particularly obliged to kick Knight Errant in the shins for the dirty tricks they pulled to get the Seattle contract. All of this is not to say that Lone Star doesn't do this kind of thing all the time. As a matter of fact, they play dirty just as often as the other AAs playing the corporate game, but they have the resources to hide it better. These adventures are meant to show that Lone Star Security Services is more than the "Blam! Blam! Halt, Lone Star! Blam!" security force most think they are, and to remind everyone Lone Star is a megacorporation like the rest, with an ego the size of Texas. And that's the Texas that goes all the way to the Rio Grande.

PLOT POINT 1

This first mini adventure, like most of the rest, can be set in any major metropolitan area where Lone Star does not have the municipal contract. In order to avoid general terms, we'll set this in Seattle and call the opposing security corp Knight Errant, but feel free to switch it over to Cheyenne and call it Eagle or New York and call it NYPD, Inc. or any other town and security corp you want.

One of the best ways to get a municipal contract from another security corp is to make it abundantly clear to the citizens of the city they're supposedly protecting just how bad a job they're doing. A good way to do this is to generate flashy screamsheet headlines showing up the cops as doing all the wrong things at all the wrong times. To make this happen, Mr. Johnson is in need of several out of town runners to wreak some orchestrated havoc on the city. He'll make the offer as a package deal with a payoff of 75,000 nuyen for the team if they complete four operations for him. This sum can be negotiated (Mr. Johnson's Negotiations dice pool is 12, with a Social Limit of 6; for full stats, use Mr. Johnson [Law Enforcement], p. 158). Each net hit for the runners is an extra 5,000 nuyen, up to 25,000, for a total of 100,000 nuyen. It's a big payoff, but he needs agreement before details are presented, though he warns that the job is not for the squeamish. Once a deal is struck, he presents the runners with their first of four dirty deeds. After each deed is complete he sends them details on the next job.

Mr. Johnson brought the runners in from out of town and has rented them three vehicles, one of which is intended to be the focus of the car chase. It's a heavily modified 2062 Ford Americar with a beat-up old body but an engine that's set up to drive fast and die soon. Even with a low-skilled driver, this machine should be able to keep the runners ahead of any pursuers long enough for the vehicles on their tail to be hacked.

JOB 1: A CHASE TO REMEMBER

Mr. Johnson's first job is a public car chase with a few twists. He wants the chase recorded by drones, and the runners must to hack the pursuing vehicles, take control, and use them to cause some public damage. It's important that none of the drivers' faces are visible in the recording, and the chase must take place in a very narrow section of the city Mr. Johnson has selected. The end of the chase needs to be staged so that it appears the pursuit vehicles are about to catch them when the recording ends.

After the choreographed chase, the runners are to deliver the getaway car to a junkyard, where Mr. Johnson's associates will dispose of it. This isn't, however, as straightforward as it seems at first. There is a terrified man tied up in the office of the junkyard; he's going to be the star of the last scene in the recording the runners are creating. He will be placed in the getaway car just before it's tossed into the crusher. The whole junkyard sequence is going to be staged so it will look like a total Knight Errant operation, top to bottom.

JOB 2: A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

The second job is a fabricated hostage situation. Mr. Johnson has already selected the location, date, and time for the attack, as well as the prospective hostages—all calculated to maximize the PR nightmare for Knight Errant while giving the runners a relatively easy job and decent escape route. (If the runners investigate, they'll discover they are targeting a reception for local survivors of the environmental disasters of the Tsimshian Nation.)

At the specified date and time the runners are to enter a reception hall, secure the doors, and take the room hostage. There are thirty guests and four staff members in the room when the runners take over. Four of the guests have tomahawks, five are armed with light pistols, two with heavy pistols. All the guests with pistols are broadcasting a valid SIN with the proper registrations and licenses for concealed carry. One of the staff members is actually a runner in the middle of another job for the same Johnson. He doesn't have a gun, but his belt is a Victorinox Memory Blade sword (p. 19, *Run & Gun*). He'll play along, but when the drek hits the fan he'll try and slip out by following the runners.

If things go according to plan, there should be no serious bloodshed and little real danger. All the runners need to do is hold the group until the Knight Errant SWAT team arrives; at worst they'll have to deal with a few panic attacks and maybe shut down a hero or two. When KE arrives, a few shots for effect will ensure the SWAT team follows SOP and throws in gas canisters before breaching the doors. Under cover of the gas, the runners can duck into a floor hatch, pre-cut by Mr. Johnson's people, dropping into unused maintenance tunnels that will get them safely to the next building.

No plan survives contact, though. When the runners pop up in the boiler room of the second building, they'll be confronted by a moral dilemma. There's only one exit, and a Perception + Intuition [Mental](3) will make them aware of sounds coming from the other side of the door. Once they open the door the sounds become clearer: muffled screams coming through the open door of a room a few meters down the hall. If they look in, the runners will see a snuff-sim in mid-production. A young elf boy is being tormented by a group of five men, one of each metatype, while a fifth man runs the simrecorder system. No matter how good their Sneaking Test, the boy spots them and locks eyes, pleading with them to help with his glance. No one else in the room is interested in the door.

The snuff-sim producers' security consists of two humans, a male and a female street razor (use Street Samurai, p. 112, *SR5*) at the top of the stairs leading to the street at the far end of the hallway. They could hear a commotion below but are fascinated by the SWAT drama next door (-4 dice pool modifier on Perception Tests). Unsuppressed gunfire downstairs will alert the two guards; unsuppressed gunfire taking out the guards will alert KE on the street—either one will blow the runners' exit.

When the runners clear the building, they will be two blocks from the main entrance to the hotel with the reception they'd crashed and behind the Knight Errant cordon. Their escape hinges on not looking suspicious as they walk away; how successful they are depends on their Con or Acting abilities and the Perception of those watching the area.

Once the runners make their escape, a later check-in of the news reveals that the encounter was not an innocuous as it may have seemed. Survivors of the Tsimshian Nation ecological disasters are forever contaminated with toxic chemicals that react violently to Knight Errant's standard gas formula. The hostages suffer hemorrhaging of the lungs and several die. All of the local news outlets—except those owned by Ares—broadcast recordings of the KE SWAT team killing hostages.

JOB 3: WANT SOME CANDY?

This one feels a little dirty, but just how dirty is really up to the runners. Mr. Johnson wants the runners to commit a series of "white van"-style kidnappings in affluent areas. This is not just scooping up barrens rats. The runners are to kidnap at least a dozen children and keep them alive and healthy until the end of the month—at which time an off-duty Lone Star officer will discover and rescue them. This work can occur in parallel with the other jobs but can cause a number of complications if the runners have kids stashed somewhere while attempting to perform other work.

Complications, in addition to keeping twelve children alive and ignorant as to the identity of their kidnappers until the Lone Star cop "rescues" them, can include: Awakened or Emergent kids, witnesses who want to be heroes, other runners hired to find the children, gangers—either where the children are grabbed or where they're held—with a code of honor to defend their own or a business model that requires shutting down anyone operating on their turf, the Knight Errant investigation getting close to the runners, or anything else the gamemaster wants to have happen.

To help keep the runners from getting caught, Mr. Johnson offers a few kilos of C-12 to destroy the site after the heroic cop gets the kids free.

JOB 4: A PRECARIOUS POSITION

Mr. Johnson wants the runners to orchestrate the sort of political scandal the newsnets love in such a way that it will be a no-win situation for Knight Errant. The runners need to snag a city official—alderman or above—stage a scene that will make him or her look as though they're neck deep in criminal activities (the violations must be serious, preferably vulgar), tip off Knight Errant

so they burst in and catch the official in what looks like a crime, then record the results. If Knight Errant goes by the book and prosecutes the official to the full extent of the law, they will lose the confidence and support of any city officials who have ever bent the rules as a favor (or who are actually corrupt)—and there's always a significant number of those in any city's government. If, however, KE goes easy on the city official because of his position, the public will see Knight Errant as corrupt and not looking out for the best interests of the people. It's up to the gamemaster how it runs, but the political fallout will be public in the screamsheets regardless.

PLOT POINT 2

After the series of jobs, Mr. Johnson will hopefully be very pleased with the runners' performance. He tells them the next job will be a single, straightforward operation requiring minimal planning and effort on the team. Mr. Johnson wants the runners to eliminate several Lone Star Personal Protection (LSPP) officers and their principal. He will provide the team with solid intel on the group, including a complete schedule for a week. The runners can use the schedule to pick the best spot for a hit. The only stipulation is that the hit needs to be public, look unprofessional, and be on property that is Knight Errant's responsibility.

After the hit Lone Star will run interference, destroying actual evidence, manufacturing fake evidence, providing impeccable witnesses with contradictory testimonies, and generally making it impossible for Knight Errant to learn anything useful. At which time, of course, they'll orchestrate a public outcry over Knight Errant's inability—or refusal—to investigate.

Mr. Johnson offers the team 100,000 nuyen. It's relatively low pay for wetwork, but Lone Star is providing all of the legwork while also protecting the runners after the fact. There is always the question of whether the runners are willing to do wetwork. Not to mention this job—taking out Lone Star personnel for Lone Star—highlights how little the megacorporation cares for the wellbeing of its employees. Or contract labor.

The target is named Gerard Duval. He's a French art dealer who sidelines as a first-class forger. He will be in the city for a week visiting art galleries to discuss purchases and sales, while seeking pieces to "evaluate"—a process that involves detailed scans he will use to create his flawless forgeries. Duval is booked at the La Maison Rouge in the heart of downtown for eight nights. He will be arriving on Saturday and departing the following Sunday. A team of five LSPP officers (use Elite Corporate Security, p. 384, *SR5*; add sleep regulator) will be with him all week, using sleep regulators and sleep shifts to maintain security. Duval is in the habit of logging onto the Saeder-Krupp grid via the secure link provided by luxury hotels at 2100 hours to upload his scans to his personal comm back in Paris. He is always back in the hotel by 2100 hours local time to log onto the Saeder-Krupp grid and upload his scans to his personal comm back in France. It's an appointment he seldom misses.

His schedule during the week is as follows:

- **Saturday:** Arrive airport, 1430 hours; then at the hotel, 1600 hours
- **Sunday:** Visit Modern Art Museum, 1230 hours; dinner out, 1800 hours; hotel, 2030 hours
- **Monday:** Visit private collector (Mafia), 1030 hours; lunch with collector, 1300 hours; visit independent art gallery, 1700 hours; hotel 2030 hours
- **Tuesday:** Visit Metropolitan Art Museum, 1030 hours; dinner out, 1800 hours; hotel 2000 hours
- **Wednesday:** Relax at the Hotel all day—pool, spa, bar, dining.
- **Thursday:** Visit Native Art Museum, 1130 hours; lunch out, 1400 hours; visit private collector (corp exec), 1530 hours; hotel, 1930 hours
- **Friday:** Visit Independent Art Museum, 1330 hours; hotel, 1600 hours; art club, 2030 hours
- **Saturday:** Hotel, 0330 hours; rehydration clinic, 1100 hours; Museum of Art, 1230 hours; visit private collector (old money), 1800 hours; hotel, 2000 hours
- **Sunday:** Airport, 1130 hours

MAFIA

The meeting takes place at the Mafioso's home so that Duval can view his private collection. The estate has sophisticated security (use Organized Crime Gang, p. 383, *SR5*). If the runners are watching from nearby they see a boy, probably thirteen, jump the fence of the gated estate and take off on his skateboard. The boy is the mobster's son. About thirty minutes later Mafia security goons will appear asking questions as they look for the boy.

CORP EXEC

The meeting takes place at the executive's downtown luxury apartment. The building security is tight from the ground up, but not from the top down. The executive does not have his own personal security.

OLD MONEY

The "old money" collector is a Vampire (p. 406, *SR5*). He's not interested in Duval as food but he will not be happy if he discovers runners snooping around.

PLOT POINT 3

Mr. Johnson contacts the runners with instructions to meet at a local cop bar. This is a typical backroom meet

with the exception of a room full of off-duty Knight Errant police/security out front. Have fun with that!

Mr. Johnson offers the runners 10,000 nuyen to act as his representatives in contracting three area gangs of different types, each of which is to perform very specific acts. It's vital the runners make sure the gangs understand all instructions must be followed to the letter, with no room for embellishments or individual interpretations. He gives the runners access to an account with 75,000 nuyen, which is a good-but-not-great budget for hiring gangs to carry out what are essentially nuisance activities. The runners can keep any money they don't spend on gangs, but lowballing or failing to pay gangs can have serious consequences. The runners will need to budget and negotiate well if they are to get what Mr. Johnson what he's paying for and make some extra cash for themselves.

For each type of gang, the gamemaster can use an existing gang from *Shadowrun* lore or create a new one for the runners to work with. This job presents the runners with a great opportunity to make their own contacts on the street (or to make enemies of a few local gangs). All gang information provided here is generic, intended to give the gamemaster raw material that can be adapted to fit their campaign.

STREET GANG

Mr. Johnson wants a highly territorial gang willing to expand their turf in a new direction. Rather than push against their neighbors for a few blocks, they are to be paid for expanding downtown. The gang is provided with a few key downtown addresses—establishments that might welcome the patronage and protection of a gang. The gang can start from any (or all—no sense in limiting the gang's expansionist spirit) of the downtown locations specified to start spreading their influence.

A street gang will have numbers to worry about as well as the possibility of losing turf at home if neighboring gangs hear they're operating elsewhere. The gang will initially shoot for the moon and ask for 40,000 nuyen to fund the expansion. They'll stall negotiations at 30,000 nuyen for a while and will go for 20,000 nuyen if the runners are really good negotiators. They will settle as low as 15,000 nuyen if they can get a runner or two to hang out in their turf. Don't let the dice do all the work—favor trading is important here. Gangs like to think they're tough, and negotiating with some genuine runners is a chance to flex their muscles from the safety of their home turf.

WIZZER GANG

Mr. Johnson wants a wizzer gang to generate intense but nonlethal magical events that will disrupt key Knight Errant precincts. Wizzer gangs are usually small and relatively rare compared to other gangs, but they are known to be arrogant, difficult to work with, and to use magic to bend negotiations their way. How they create the disturbances is up to the wizzers. They can summon small spirits to irritate the locals or commit minor vandalism or snarl traffic with casting confusion spells or cast illusions, anything to create awkward or scary situations. The only stipulations are they must be intense and not hurt anyone directly. They are to attack the precincts individually, overwhelming one, then moving out of the area before the arcane investigators arrive. They can hit any precinct as often as they'd like.

The wizzer gang will not name an opening price; instead ask for the runners' best offer up front. The runners may anticipate Mind Probes or something similar, but the wizzers will not use anything so invasive (or so easy to spot and counter). The wizzers will read the runners' auras throughout the negotiation to judge when the runners are not being completely open or can be pushed to pay more. Wizzers will cite things such as the cost of reagents, the strain on themselves, the risk of running across other gangs, or the danger of paranormals being attracted to the casting to make the case for receiving the maximum price possible.

GO-GANG

Mr. Johnson wants a go-gang to harass several Lone Star protected sites, some Lone Star Penitentiary Services prisoner transports, and some specific Lone Star personnel in Knight Errant precincts. The goal is to create so many incidents that the local Knight Errant offices won't be able to respond in a timely manner, much less investigate fully. Lone Star media can then document how Knight Errant is deliberately refusing to support Lone Star or to follow through on cases in which they are the victims—being at best unprofessional and at worst vindictive in not honoring its contracts and callously leaving a fellow agency to flap in the wind.

The go-gang will emphasize their overhead and risks they'll be taking. Their opening bid will be for 50,000 nuyen up front and cost-free repair of and vehicles damaged doing the job. It will take solid negotiations to get them down to a price the runners can manage (and the runners definitely cannot manage an open-ended promise of repairs). The go-gang will not hire on for less than 30,000 nuyen.

WHY NOT US?

Street gangs aren't professional runners. Instructions to keep the deal quiet—even if they swear solemnly to do so—will not keep them from bragging on their new turf and street-tough benefactors. This is going to make at least one rival gang very unhappy with the runners and their choice of partners. Not only did the runners disrespect them even though, in their view, they're a better and tougher gang, but the choice will cost them money that they believe should have been theirs. The runners have given them no choice but to make their point with

some mobile suppressive fire—that is, a drive-by. The gang will use two sedans and two drivers in the attack (use Corporate Security, p. 382, *SR5*; add Pilot Ground Craft 3), two shooters per car (use Corporate Security, p. 382, *SR5*), and a mage (use Corporate Security Lieutenant, p. 382, *SR5*, add Lightning Ball) in the rear car casting Lightning Ball spells. If they catch three or fewer runners are on the street they'll open fire. Four or more runners and the gangers will just glare as they drive by. If they do shoot, the gangers will make one pass then run. If the runners don't take them out immediately can give chase. If they let the gangers get back to their home turf, the runners will face thirty more gangers waiting and ready to rock.

PRESCIENT WIZARDS

The wizzer gang has stumbled into a little trouble. One of their target areas is under the protection of a small street gang called the Skores. Normally a street gang wouldn't present much of a problem to a wizzer gang, but all of the Skores are adepts (use Gunslinger Adept, p. 123, *SR5*; Brawler Adept, p. 117, *SR5*; Combat Medic, p. 161, *Run Faster*; and Marksman Adept, p. 164, *Run Faster*). Worse, they have a spirit pact with a free city spirit named Main (p. 202, *Street Grimoire*). The gifts of the pact are up to the gamemaster. The Skores roughed up one member of the wizzer gang and are holding another. They've figured out the wizzers were hired and are threatening to kill the hostage if the gang doesn't tell them who wanted them to threaten their turf and why.

The leader of the wizzer gang comes to the runners to find out why the runners hired them—information he can use to buy his ganger's life. He doesn't want the runners to know the wizzers came up against a gang they can't handle and won't tell them why he wants the information at first. If that doesn't work out the way he wants, he'll tell the runners the general situation—he and/or other gang members will be reading the runners' auras to gauge their feelings and intentions. If they still don't give him the information, he'll try to get the runners to help free the hostage. He'll try to get their services for free, but will offer up to twenty-five percent of what the

runners paid the gang for their help. They wizzers will have street info that the Skores have four street-level members and an elusive boss named Main, currently operating out of a small bar on (of course) Main Street.

Main is only interested in getting the interlopers to get out of his neighborhood and never come back. But if the runners use violence in their rescue attempt, he'll order the Skores to respond with greater violence.

PLOT POINT 4

A GAME OF CHESS

Mr. Johnson invites the runners to meet in the back room of another Knight Errant cop bar. When the runners enter the back room, the table is set with a good but not extravagant mea. A trid screen is set up on the back wall. Mr. Johnson tells the runners that they have earned greater consideration, and he invites them to eat before getting down to business.

After the meal, Mr. Johnson dims the lights and activates the trid screen. The image is divided into six sections, with the figure of a single individual centered in each section. He tells the runners that the next phase of the operation is a "game of chess" for which he's offering 75,000 nuyen. Street slang for Knight Errant officers is "pawns"—Mr. Johnson wants the team to capture six of those pawns. If the runners want to negotiate the price at this point, he'll tell them to wait until they know all the details.

Mr. Johnson cycles through the six Knight Errant officers on the screen, showing each individually as he names them then briefly describing each one's rank, patrol area, home address, and a few personal details such as routines and habits. After the last report, the screen again divides into six images, but now it's six live feeds showing all six of the targets drinking in the KE cop bar out front. Mr. Johnson explains it's important that each cop be captured with minimum damage to their persons and their uniforms and equipment intact. The live images continue to fill the screen as the runners negotiate their price and Mr. Johnson gives them more complete files on the targets.

If the runners negotiate shrewdly, they can talk Mr. Johnson up to a total payout of 100,000 nuyen.

PAVVN PATROLS

A pair of patrol cops is up first. Daryl Sands and Peter Dontane are young cops who are both trained riggers but have less than a year of street patrol experience. They share a two-bedroom apartment over a Stuffer Shack smack dab in the middle of their patrol neighborhood. Their KE-issued squad car, a modified Dodge Charger is parked nearby whenever they're off-duty. They are part of a special "No Precinct" program; other than to drop off evidence or captured perps, they don't report to a physical precinct unless there is an emergency. All of their communications are done through the Matrix and they are backed up by drones located in Knight Errant boxes throughout the city.

Their patrol area is only eight square blocks, but their response zone is a twenty-five-square-kilometer section of the city. The officers will respond using the drones if they are too far or feeling particularly uninclined to travel. The zone is almost entirely a middle-class corporate neighborhood with a thin veil of freedom created by their friendly local Knight Errant officers and the drones that cover the area.

Given the wide range of options, the gamemaster can run the capture of these two based on the plan the runners put together. They can be taken at home, drawn to a location, taken on patrol, or snagged in some elaborate plan where they capture one and draw the other in to get captured.

SNATCHING SVVAT

Tactical Officers Almazon and Schultz have been wearing their Knight Errant badges since the mid '60s. They only joined forces in '72 when they got assigned to their current team, but the pair hit it off immediately and have been watching each other's back ever since. They're both listed as being Enhanced Officers, but no more specifics are provided.

Grabbing a pair of combat-veteran SWAT officers won't be easy, especially with the required minimum of injury and undamaged gear. It should be clear that trying to take these two while they are geared up and on duty would be dumb; if the runners try, feel free to put them up against an entire SWAT team (use SWAT Team Member, p. 159). The best bet would be to grab this pair while they're off-duty, blowing off steam on a Scorpion joyride through the local wilds.

After an exciting op, the pair likes to hop on their Harleys and use their credentials to ride like wild men and then stop off at a little mob-run massage parlor for a happy ending. They'll usually camp out in the local wilds for the few nights they have off, drinking and enjoying some local company or getting in a little hunting depending on the season.

SNAGGING A SARGE

Sgt. Alexander Bishop has been running the front office of his precinct for over twenty-five years, with ten years on the street before that. At fifty-three, he's the oldest target, but he's smart and can smell trouble coming a mile away. He works the twelve-hour overnight shifts on Friday and Saturday from 1900-0700 hours, as well as covering the office during its regular daytime hours from 0700-1600 hours Monday to Thursday. When on duty you won't find him further from the front desk than the lunchroom, and even that's a rare event. He likes to keep things in order at all times.

The runners' best chance at grabbing him would be Thursday afternoon or Sunday morning after work—either would give them the longest window of time before anyone notices he's missing. They should definitely go with snagging him from home. His home is a sad reminder of his career as a cop: it contains many photos of him with various political figures or receiving awards and a few shots of him alone on vacations. But there are a lot of technological toys, and his home is thoroughly monitored. If the runners don't take care of his security system first, he'll know they're coming. The system is mostly wired cameras, but there is an exploitable wireless point between his home node and his personal commlink, which is installed in his head.

DELIVERING A DETECTIVE

Detective Elizabeth Queen has made a lot of hard to decisions get to where she is in life. Standing up to organized crime, ignoring megacorporate bullying, and pushing through the political menagerie that is Knight Errant are simply the most obvious, but she has never backed down from a fight or investigation no matter the political cost, so long as the case was just.

That's why the runners are going to get a little more than they bargained for when they make a move to take the Queen. She has another party interested in her and they aren't as concerned about the state of her equipment or health. The local organized crime syndicate has hired a hitman (use Marksmen Adept, p. 164, *Run Faster*) to put an end to Miss Queen's sleuthing career, and the hit will coincide nicely with the runners making their move.

PLOT POINT 5

FAUX-PAWNS

When the runners deliver the first officers to the exchange point, a warehouse far from where any of the missions have been taking place, Mr. Johnson presents them with the last phase of the plan. He wants the runners to impersonate the officers, complete with official gear, as they commit different despicable events that will damage Knight Errant's reputation and credibility. He will provide nanopaste disguises and illusion spell formulae, which, along with the officer's gear that the runners have grabbed, ensure the runners will pass for the Knight Errant officers long enough to complete the job. Each impersonation is a separate job negotiation. Mr. Johnson offers 10,000 nuyen for the team, with negotiations upping the payment by 1,000 nuyen per net hit up to 15,000 nuyen.

Each job must be carried out to his specifications and recorded. If possible, things should be staged so that members of the public also record the events; public recordings spread on the Matrix faster than news stories.

The runners will be paid for each impersonation when they turn in their recording.

PATROL COPS

Sands and Dontane will beat a preadolescent kid for talking back. A physical illusion will work as well as an actual beating and will be better for the runners' Karma. How the runners stage the beating is up to them as long as they look authentic and recordings of their impersonations stand up to scrutiny. If the runners actually beat a kid, drop the Karma awarded the team by 1 and drop 2 for the runner who did the actual beating.

SWAT OFFICERS

Almazon and Schultz will bust a drug house, chasing the gang away instead of arresting them, and then steal all of the cash and drugs. This will require a little combat action on the runners' part unless they can find a gang that wants to play the part.

DESK SERGEANT

This one presents the greatest risk of discovery. The runner needs to portray Bishop on duty, actually taking one of his shifts at the precinct. He must then be recorded letting a few joygirls and/or joyboys go free after sampling their wares. There are more streetwalkers and more opportunities on the overnight shifts, but the runners have to follow Bishop's schedule and may have to work more than one shift (thus increasing the danger) for the right chance.

PLAYING THE QUEEN

In another high-risk portrayal, Detective Queen must be recorded arriving at the scene of an actual crime committed by the runners and then destroying evidence. The crime has to be serious and the evidence, deliberately left by the runners, unmistakable. Playing this out on an actual crime scene will definitely have the runners sweating.

BITTER PILLS

There are few moments that can exhilarate a man more than sitting unseen, less than an arm's length from another, and knowing their quarry is completely unaware of your existence despite their own personal feelings of control in a situation. Mika reveled in the feeling as he subtly shifted his grip on the small loop he had fastened to the two centimeters of exposed bolt the builders had left jutting from the wall above the very narrow drop ceiling. His other hand dangled free, able to adjust the small camera and microphone he had aimed at his clueless quarry. Both legs were resting at the ankles on the supports for the door frame, though his feet were splayed to the side to avoid scraping the drop ceiling in the narrow space.

Mika could picture the smug expressions on their faces as they spoke.

"The success rates are beyond even what I had expected." The junior researcher spoke with a hint of awe in his voice. Mika knew it as the voice of Kalinski.

"The performance rates are exactly as documented in my Submission for Experimentation Approval," Dr. Kirtz said in a voice dripping with disdain.

"I understand that but for ..." Kalinski started, but Kirtz cut him off.

"You are a New Haven alum, correct?" Kirtz's question sounded rather innocent, but Mika had spent enough time keeping tabs on elitist scientists to see what was coming.

"Yes. Yale class of '68," Kalinski said proudly, unaware of what he was setting himself up for.

"That makes sense. You see, had you spent time in Mission Hills you would have realized the value of precision. A greater-than-expected success rate would mean a failure to understand your own process."

With a thought, Mika called up the feed from the thermal camera to his contacts. He watched in amusement as Kalinski's thermal signature changed. His faced warmed, flush with blood, likely due to anger at the insult to his alma mater rather than embarrassment, though it could have been a mix of both. Amused enough for the moment, Mika sent a signal through the trodes to clear his vision.

"A valuable lesson, sir," Kalinksi replied with a mouth full of crow.

"Make sure to correct the report and remove any unnecessary commentary on the success rate."

"Dr. Kirtz, might I mention that those who read our reports may not be sufficiently impressed with the 2.45 percent. I thought the emphasis on our initial expectation of 2.4391 percent and the not-insignificant improvement in the results could buy us more support. Your solid results and this issue's high priority status would certainly get us a funding bump."

"Unlike you Elis, who enjoy a head rubbing when your falsely humbled results bear overripe fruit, those of a solid research education don't pander to the egos of the executive. Nor do we attempt a manipulation of our betters through unsubtle reminders of their personal connections to their research. I am well aware of the need to solve the dilemma of CFD in order to re-establish contact with valuable intellectual resources. However, for now we have to work with what we have. Send me a copy of your corrected reports by noon."

Mika heard Kirtz's punctuation of the degrading speech in his footsteps as he walked away without waiting for a response from Kalinski. The footsteps faded to a distant tapping through the microphone.

"Harvard douche," Kalinski muttered before turning to walk into his office.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Evo is in it deep with the CFD virus outbreak, especially with the events of Boston still fresh in the minds of people around the world. While events like the Chicago Containment Zone and the Renraku Arcology shutdown were flash-in-the-pan moments for most of the world, Boston's Lockdown and the CFD virus look to have both a longer and broader impact. Evo is trying to fly under the CFD radar and avoid fingers being pointed their way, but they still want a cure/treatment for the malady. That means they are putting their money into operations to procure methods from other corps instead of allocating money internally for research. They hope that as a result of their efforts, the Corporate Court might believe them to be guilty of corporate espionage, but any part they might have in what happened in Boston will be concealed.

Zeta-ImpChem is currently one of the prime targets

in Evo's sights. The European megacorporation primarily known for its cutting-edge drug manufacture has been making a lot of noise lately about finding the cure but also speaking to the Corporate Court behind closed doors about finding the source, or at least the source responsible for the incident in Boston.

PLOT POINT 1

Mr. Johnson for this job is actually best pulled from the characters' own list of contacts—a fixer, smuggler, or other acquisition specialist who the runners know approaches the team with a fairly mundane hijacking job. The runners' contact is serving as a middleman, having been contacted by a client to arrange for a pair of GMC Mules (GMC Bulldog Step-Van variant, see p. 463, *SR5*) to get lost in transit between the local shipping hub and a warehouse. The initial description of the job should sound very simple.

Mr. Johnson is offering 25,000 nuyen for each van, cargo intact. How the runners want to split that is up to them. He won't say what the cargo is and will make an off-handed comment about runners and their superior skills at avoiding being nosy. Negotiations won't do squat. Their contact is already offering everything he can, apart from the small cut that is for his work. If runners insist on rolling against their own contact (default state: dice pool 7, limit 3), they can increase the amount per van by 2,500 nuyen per net hit up to 4 hits, but they lose Favor with that contact or decrease Loyalty by 2.

Mr. Johnson provides the starting and ending points for the vans, but he doesn't know the route they will be taking. As soon as the deal is struck, he calls the client, tells him the job is a go, and then gives the runners a thumbs up. This is a chance for a nosy hacker to intercept the call and maybe find out that their contact is calling a commlink number on the Aztlan grid. While in the end there is no serious Aztlan power being brought to bear in this adventure, the specter of the Big A may be enough to make the players nervous.

The Mules start out being loaded at a local shipping hub. Landlocked cities may be using a train depot or airport, while cities on the water have the shipment coming in via the local waterways and through the docks. The Mules are loaded by the time the runners get hired, so they can't get to the shipment before that point.

The Mules' destination is a classic warehouse facility. It's a fifty-meter-wide, one hundred-meter-long, five-meter-high, aluminum-walled, overgrown shed, with a pair of HoopHoles portable toilets right next to a few vending machines. Next to the large shed is a smaller office shack, which is six meters square and three meters high, along with what appears to be an oversized cargo container. It's actually an elevator to the lower levels. If the runners wait until the Mules get here, they are going to get themselves quite the surprise. Security for inside this place is listed in Plot Point 5. Hopefully, that information isn't needed in this Plot Point (or even that Plot Point), but you never know with runners.

If the runners go inside, they find the Mules lined up to be unloaded into the elevator so their contents can be taken down to the lower lab. They also run across the security force who is quite willing to warn whoever owns this place that intruders have arrived and are causing trouble. They would be well advised to finish the job they were hired to do before security freaks out.

The route the Mules take can be up to the gamemaster but should add some good flavor from their local campaign. Maybe the runners can get friendly with the Mule drivers by chasing off some go-gangers, or they can use some local connections to hire a go-gang to run some interference for them. Use the setting for this adventure to add flavor, but try not to make it too hard. They have plenty of road to cover.

Once they have the van(s), the runners are given a drop off spot. At the meet are a trio of local gangers, their contact, and an unfamiliar man in a dark longcoat and fedora. The man in the fedora works for the client and is there to check the cargo. Once he has verified the cargo, the runners are wired their money along with a ten percent bonus if they didn't look in the back. If they do look in the back, they see a large number of crates and boxes with the Zeta-ImpChem logo on them. Runners with skills related to Cybertechnology, Surgery, Electronic Engineering, or Nanotechnology can make a Logic + [Appropriate Knowledge Skill] (4) Test to get an idea that this equipment has something to do with their selected field.

PLOT POINT 2

The client is impressed (if they did well) or feeling forgiving (if they did not) with the runners' first bit of work. He uses the same intermediary to set up a personal meeting with the runners. The team is told to head to the meet site and sit down for a meal with the client.

If the runners did well on the first job, pay for the next one starts at 40,000-nuyen total—half up front, half on the back end. If they did not do well in the Mule heist, it starts at half that, with none of it offered up front.

The meet goes down at a public park in the late afternoon. There is an abundance of normal people around, who function as yet another test of the runners' skills and habits, while providing a little extra security for the client. The client looks like your everyday sarariman out for a walk after work, and he approaches the runners asking for suggestions on a spot to dine in the area. The runners receive the job details as they walk with Mr. Johnson.

The client wants the team to intercept a courier moving valuable data between two addresses, both of which are downtown. He knows the move is supposed to occur between 1130 hours and 1500 hours. This is outside prime shadowrunning hours, hence the daytime meeting to see if they can operate when not disguised by their nocturnal surroundings. The client has a physical description of the courier and knows there will be at least two people assigned as a security detail. He wants the runners to contact him immediately once they have the courier.

The client has a mage and a rigger watching over him. The mage is pretending to be exercising. He will be doing warm up stretches until the team arrives and then jogs past the group, stops for some calisthenics every fifty to one hundred yards, and he always seems to be running past the group (Logic + Willpower [4] Test to recognize the mage the second time he passes; the threshold decreases by one each time the mage passes again. For stats, use Combat Mage, (p. 116, *SR5*). The rigger is working through the eyes of several of the kids' drones that are buzzing around the park (use Drone Rigger, p. 124, *SR5*). He has an MCT Roto-Drone armed with an AK-97 in the van with him on a nearby street (use MCT-Nissan Roto-Drone, p. 466, *SR5*; add AK-97 w/ 100 gel rounds).

The client doesn't have the route for the courier run because the courier run is exactly that, a run. The courier will suddenly bolt out of the delivery address with a case in his hands and start running down the street. Seconds later (two Combat Turns if the runners jump right into the action), a man in a suit will come out the same door, look around, then start running after the courier. The man in the suit is actually half of the courier's security. The other member of the security team is a block over and will be paralleling the chase in his security van, but first he launches several drones. A pair of Microskimmers launch from an upper floor window of the departure building after fifteen seconds (5 Combat Turns) and head in the direction of the foot chase. Another fifteen seconds later, a pair of Roto-Drones armed with SA Retiarus netguns (p. 28, *Run & Gun*) launch from the roof of the departure building.

The chase proceeds through streets, alleys, and buildings, with the pursuers neither gaining nor losing any ground. About halfway to the destination, the courier dumps the case in a pile of trash in an alley. The runner team may see this through a drone, from the astral, or they may just notice it's gone if they catch sight of her. The case is a decoy. There's a commlink (Device Rating 4) inside with fifteen datafiles, all with Rating 5 data bombs on them. The real data is located on the courier's headware.

The courier run takes about thirty minutes. Though the distance is under six kilometers directly between the two sites and the courier is hauling hoop, the route is not direct. If the runner team makes a move on the courier, the security team will close in on the attackers, while the courier will move more directly toward the drop-off spot. This more direct route means the she will cut the remaining travel time in half.

This Plot Point rolls right into the next one.

PLOT POINT 3

The client gives the runner team an address for the meet that is only two blocks from the delivery address. The site is an old parking substructure that is being remodeled and redesigned to better support the structures around it. While the runners are driving or walking in, be sure to mention the puffs of dust coming from the extensive cracks in the concrete, leaking pipes, and makeshift structural supports. The meet is on the B4 level; the runners will know the place. Upon arrival he transfers the money to the runners even before the courier is handed over. He's confident like that.

The place the runners are headed down to is a small room that is built from the remains of cars, parking blocks, and other random pieces of the structure. The walls are a meter or more thick, though not solid, and the room within is only four meters on the sides and two meters tall. Mr. Johnson will meet the runners right outside of a makeshift door that uses the wheels of other vehicles to roll and lock. If the runners get a quick look inside, they see a small room with a single, sturdy metal chair at the center, directly over a manhole, with chains overhead dangling loose. The floor around the room is stained with what is obviously blood.

Mr. Johnson takes the courier into the room and asks the runners to stick around for a few minutes, then he closes the door. Security in the area comes in the form of a pack of ghouls (p. 404, *SR5*). Mr. Johnson has struck a deal with them to protect him and their little chamber from prying eyes that might look through whatever is left over after his conversations. The runners will hear

nothing but the pops and cracks of the failing structure around them for approximately fifteen minutes, when the pings and creaks of the makeshift door announce the return of Mr. Johnson. He steps out, wipes his hands on a bloody cloth, then makes his next offer to the runners.

He now wants them to take the place of the courier and deliver the data. He's well aware that the data was not in the case and is instead in the head of the courier. He can't move the data since the information is locked and coded, but he has a secondary plan. He has violently removed the headware and is willing to crudely implant the gear into a runner with a little help from a member of his security detail. His plan is to partially scalp a runner at the base of their skull, slip the device under their skin, heal the wound through magic, and then make another tiny cut where the port is. He has done this before, and it will work for a short time. The procedure causes 2 boxes of Physical Damage. The healer has a base of 8 dice to roll for casting Heal. An unhealed injury will mean the box has to be removed (the damage caused by the attempt remains), and someone else will need to volunteer. The device also only has two hours of reserve power. After that it will need to be reinstalled in a subject or removed and the backup power cell replaced. This should not be a problem, as the runners are now asked to make the delivery and have only a short time left in the delivery window.

As if installation wasn't a big enough problem, the runner posing as the courier is going to be the target of another runner team. This other team, working for Evo as security backup, has access to the stealth RFID tracker within the courier's headware. They've been called in and have done a quick recon of the garage to locate the target, and they know the device was moved to someone else. They'll keep their distance to the flanks (two runners on each flank) as the runners move toward their group in the front (two more runners). They'll close in fast once they get the target into an alley or other narrow, pinned space. If the runner-courier decides to walk out on the public streets to use anonymity as his/her defense, the group will roll up in three vans and pin them in, along with whatever civilians are around.

The security team on their hoops isn't the end of their troubles. The runner-courier is going to have to play it cool when security at the delivery point questions their ID. This tense little ending scene doesn't offer any serious consequences unless the runner in question completely blows his cover and attacks the security guard questioning them.

After that, the runners may have a little trouble from the remaining security team on the outside, but they get called off when the delivery is made. The runners can be left confused as to what just happened, but that's how shadowrunning works sometimes. It isn't always neat and clean with an easily explained ending; sometimes it's quick and dirty, and all the runners get is a fat credstick with 20,000 nuyen on it and a pile of unanswered questions.

PLOT POINT 4

Mr. Johnson has another shipment he wants snagged for another 25,000 nuyen lump-sum payment. The cargo is being moved in GMC Mules again, but this time there is a quartet of them, and Mr. Johnson only wants one. He doesn't care what happens to the rest of the vans, but payment is based on a single vehicle with intact cargo being delivered to him. Additional cargo will earn them nothing extra, and Mr. Johnson will make sure to tell them that up front. He wants them focused on getting him what he wants, not trying to spread their resources to gain more nuyen.

The vehicles will all be starting at a rundown business office with underground parking in a less-than-savory part of town. In Seattle that can be the Redmond or Puyallup Barrens, in Denver the Aurora Warrens, and in Manhattan the Pit. Outside of these sprawls, every major metropolitan area has someplace where their SINless, soulless, and sad are cast off. The Mules depart together but take four different routes to their destination. The destination is the same warehouse the runners may have dealt with in the first Plot Point. The route is up to the gamemaster but should provide enough time for the runners to approach at least two vans, maybe even run at all of them if the vehicles keep having problems. The vans are keeping radio silence between each other and won't communicate an attack if one occurs.

Security on the vans is tight, especially their Matrix security. Those providing the security are covering their angles, but a perceptive team may notice that a lot of the security is about keeping something in as much as keeping the transports safe.

Each Mule has Rating 8 wifi-inhibiting paint covering the cargo area, providing a -8 Noise penalty. Each vehicle has a trail car with four occupants: a rigger (use Drone Rigger, p. 124, *SR5*) controlling the van and two drones (GM-Nissan Roto-Drone w/ loaded with gel rounds; GM-Nissan Roto-Drone w/ loaded with Ex-explosive ammo), a decker (use Decker, p. 121, *SR5*) protecting the vehicle's node and the rigger from Matrix attacks as well as monitoring Matrix traffic from the vehicle, and two guards (use Elite Corporate Security, p. 384, *SR5*). The car is almost a kilometer back and suffers a Noise penalty for control, another clue that something strange is afoot.

On the Astral, there are eight bound spirits (Force 6 spirit of beasts; Force 6 spirit of fire; six Force 4 spirits of fire). The spirit of beast is on orders to chase off or engage any astral forms that try to enter the vehicle. The Force 4 spirits of fire are moving in the astral on the outside of the vehicle. The Force 6 spirit of fire is materialized inside the vehicle and has orders to lead the Force 4 spirits of fire in Engulfing the contents of the vehicle if an order comes through the speaker.

The distance of the security personnel and the presence of a primarily astral and drone security detail should be good clues that something is awry. Those with security procedures-related Knowledge Skills need 2 hits to know this is usually done for radioactive, highly toxic, or other cargo that is dangerous to people.

The cargo is six large black bags, each with a head case inside. The bags are made from Universal Mirror Material (p. 64, *Run & Gun*) that inhibits the signal from the nanites and prevents them from disrupting the Matrix around them. All of the head cases are drugged, though the nanites could easily clean out their systems if they see an opportunity to get away. They will most definitely do this if the spirit of fire gets the order to burn them, and all hell will break loose.

The order to burn the contents comes if the security team loses control, or feels they are going to lose control, of the vehicle. If the order gets through, the spirits attack the head cases, and the head cases wake up and attempt to flee. If they succeed in getting out of the bags, the rest of their escape should go smoothly, because the spirits do not like their masters and will not burn anything that is not in the bags, since those are their orders.

If the runners can smoothly separate security and then take the van over and drive it to Mr. Johnson, they are all good. As long as the order never comes through the speaker, the spirits of fire won't attack the head cases, and the spirit of beasts only cares about the astral.

Once the runners have a van and contact Mr. Johnson, he directs them to the parking garage again. When they arrive he pays them, sends them off to the surface level in a beat-up Bulldog, and tells them to stick around. This is another double job.

PLOT POINT 5

Now that they have a cargo van from the opposition, Mr. Johnson needs the runners to gain access to the labs hidden beneath the warehouse and gain access to the research data that Z-IC has so far. This is definitely all part of a larger scheme and plan by Mr. Johnson, because he offers a plan to get them in. He invites them down after thirty minutes with the offer of another job. He has emptied the Mule they delivered to him, and a half-dozen body bags lay spread on the ground, open and empty. His plan is similar to the classic Trojan horse. The runners get into the bags and hide inside the van to sneak past security in the warehouse. Once they are inside, he wants them to download as much data on the current research going on in that lab as they can and then cause an "accident" to destroy the lab. The pay offer is 75,000 nuyen if they agree to his plan, or 50,000 nuyen (a significant

cut) if they want the job but want to get in their own way. Negotiations play out as normal, with a 2,500 nuyen increase per net hit for the Trojan horse job and a 1,000 nuyen increase per net hit if they are following their own plan. Wary runners may be concerned about being trapped like that and wonder why they are getting paid more—it doesn't feel right—but business-savvy runners see the reason for the difference in pay. If they agree, into the bags they go. Make it dramatic and remember that there is a limited amount of space in the bags, so gear needs to stay reasonable. Additionally, the bags have wifi-inhibiting properties, so communication between runners in bags will be difficult.

As for the lab, they are doing research on a treatment and prevention method for Cognitive Fragmentation Disorder (CFD). The Z-IC team has had a lot of success and are only a few months worth of tests away from getting this process approved. The lab also has developed an extensive web of connections based on coding, subjects, and several other factors that point several large fingers at NeoNET and Evo as the source of the CFD virus. This is very dangerous, and valuable, information that Mr. Johnson wants to get his hands on.

If the runners accept the bag trick, they will get all the way into the facility, be loaded onto carts, and get wheeled to a set of holding rooms, where they will be locked in. They won't have a way to communicate with each other, and only someone capable of astral projection will be able to see that everyone is close to each other, so they should each be separately allowed to decide when they are going to try their escape. Whoever ends up selecting the earliest point will kick it off, and others will have to give up their plans and join in (or stay in their bags). The transport team has four security guards (use Corporate Security, p. 382, *SR5*; add Exotic Ranged Weapon: Dart Rifle 4 to their skill list) all using dart rifles loaded with narcoject (p. 410, *SR5*).

If the runners decide to try to make their own way in, they face the physical and magical security in the warehouse as well as the Matrix security on the system that allows access to the secret labs. They have to worry about the surface security warning the security below, but probably not in the way they think. There is no wired or wireless Matrix connection between the floors, and therefore no messages can be sent. What they have is a sort of panic button that is nothing more than a set of big red handles that set off a siren downstairs. Any of the handles will set off the alarm, but security forces have to get to them and spend a Complex Action activating them by pumping the handle. Very retro. The handles are located next to the elevator, near the front door, and near the rear door.

Security forces in the warehouse consist of eight security guards (use Corporate Security, p. 382, *SR5*), one security mage/animal handler (use Corporate Security Lieutenant, p. 382, *SR5*; add Animal Handling 4 to the skill list), and a pair of barghests (p. 403, *SR5*). Two of the guards are in the office, two are in nests up in the corners of the warehouse's rafters, two are standing guard near the elevator, and the final two are wherever will cause the most problems for the runners. The barghests and their handler are hanging out inside a warded (Force 6) semi trailer that protects the barghests from astral distractions and allows the mage to hide within. The mage will summon on the first turn of combat while warning the guards that the hounds are coming out. The security guards will all have to use a Simple Action to activate their hearing dampers to block out the barghest howl.

The office has some shoddy construction (Structure 2, Armor 4) but still provides a little protection against those firing at the guards inside. The nests are pretty solid, with sandbag sides (Structure 8, Armor 12), but the wood bottoms are a weak point (Structure 2, Armor 4).

The facility below is not retro, but it is closed off from the world above, and especially from the Matrix. The lab complex below is only a dozen rooms. The elevator opens to a small storage room with a large fridge and several stacks of crates in the corners, the majority marked with the Zeta-ImpChem logo. Two exits lead from this room. One is an open entryway next to the fridge leading to a kitchen and dining area. The other is the first in a series of six sliding airlock-style doors along a white hallway. Between each airlock door are more sliding doors on each side of the hall.

The first pair of doors lead to living quarters for the lab's staff. Behind the door on the right is a small entrance alcove with two doors leading to medium-sized apartments for the two primary scientists. The left door leads to a similar alcove and splits a pair of communal living areas that house a total of eight other staff members, four lab techs, and four security officers.

The second pair of doors hold offices and housing for security. The right holds the main security office and housing for two guards. The left has a medium-size apartment for the security chief and housing for six officers.

The third and fourth sets of doors lead to labs on each side. There are two medical labs, a computer lab, and a science lab.

Beyond the fifth doorway are the subject storage rooms. They currently contain three subjects, but there are a total of twelve small sealed cells. This is where the runners will be headed if they come in through the Trojan horse plan. If they wait until they are inside the cells, they'll risk the door being slammed shut with the guard in the room when they start to make a move. They'll need to roll Initiative and use their Surprise Action or move at the top of the order to get clear of the room, or else they're locked in until someone releases them.

The facility has no wireless signals at all. Everything is hardwired through the walls and controlled from the security office. Since they are doing CFD research, the reason for this is obvious. Inside the security office, all device access is wired. The security decker has to physically jack into the system (treat it as a Rating 6 host, A 9, S 8, D 6, F 7).

When the runners break out, remember that not all of the security forces are on duty, in armor, and ready to roll. If the runners can get an early advantage, security may stand down. With luck, the runners can get cleared, meet Mr. Johnson, and get paid.

THE UPRISING

:: Special SIG created by Glitch
:: Access granted to:
[JackPoints TriAdmin], [Thorn], [Fianchetto]

I am keeping access to this powder keg limited for the time being until it is safe to release to the whole of JackPoint

This audio file was auctioned on the Helix Veiling a week ago. While unobtrusive on first glance, it attracted a lot of attention when the price skyrocketed due to several parties engaging in a bidding competition for its acquisition. After several potential buyers were—forcefully—shut down due to full-blown digital assaults on their connections, the prevailing tenderer just managed to close the transaction before the Helix was attacked by the force of GOD on behalf of the CCMA. Due to the full-blown corporate crackdown on the grid, the Helix had to be taken offline for a few days to not face the same fate as Asgard did when it was shut down by Aztechnology. After serious threats from both sides to retaliate, the conflict has now de-escalated, and the Helix is back in business. From what the megacorporate grapevine is telling, however, the whole roundup was sanctioned higher up the food chain by the Corporate Court.
Glitch

:: Voice analysis activated
:: Audio-to-Transcript initiated
#Time-stamp of recoding 26.12.2076#

[Person 1, male with slight French accent]: Thank you for meeting us under such secretive circumstances.

[Person 2, female, Asian inflections, probably Korean]: Thank you. Panama City is always worth the trip, especially when all expenses are paid. And it is good that we were able to meet in parallel to the conference. Yes, I guess I am familiar with everyone from occasional megacorporate gatherings directly, or I know at least who you represent.

[Person 3, female, probably American or Indo-american]: Good having you here, dear. I think you will find our proposal quite unusual or even bold. However, be assured that we come together with the best interests of megacorporate society at heart.

[P2]: That sounds quite intriguing. So please—tell me more. My superiors were quite vague about this assignment, saying only that it may become a high priority and that I am the first to be briefed.

[Person 4, male, accent 85% British]: Let's have a seat while we attempt an explanation. *[People mumbling in background]*. Enable security protocol. Full lockdown with perimeter sweeps. And please leave the room. Thank you.

[P3]: You have been selected because of your unwavering loyalty to your company, displayed in your more than forty years of service. Apart from your experience in megacorporate politics and economics, you have also received the proper training to resist common interrogation techniques and are able to evade capture. If necessary you are willing to sacrifice your own life to protect your company, a devotion that is rarely found and that has been recognized by your superiors.

[P2]: While flattering, I don't think I fully understand. Will that be necessary?

[P4]: We hope it does not come to that. However, what we are trying to accomplish would be considered a conspiracy or treason by those in power, even though the opposite is the case. What we are trying to achieve, or what we are trying to change, is for the better of all exterritorial corporations.

[P3]: Not just for the Big Ten [chuckles].

[P1]: That depends. It could be beneficial for everyone.

[P2]: Care to elaborate? What exactly is your group trying to achieve? My management seemed to be open to some kind of idea that was initially pitched to them, but details were missing. So please explain. In detail.

[P3]: Of course. I need to give some context, however, for you to understand. Most megacorporations, no matter their culture of origination, are after more than success, good profits, and long-term stability. They want to grow and grow until they eventually become part of the elite Triple-A circle and grab hold of one of the precious ten seats of power of the world. Essentially, they try to be gods. This the nature of the corporate ladder. In the past our corporations were the same. We saw only the climb of the ladder. However, after some decades, we realized that the system is inherently chaotic. That it is faulty. It brings out the worst in us. Competition instead of cooperation. For most corporations it is just about going up. They push competitors off the ladder,

watch them fall so that they may gobble up the remnants if they break. Egocentric infighting for ascension, for the biggest bone on the yard, instead of mutualism. Instead of exchange for prosperity.

[P1]: This has not been more visible than now.

[P2]: You are talking about the planned Revision. We are not scared of that.

[P4]: Neither are we. But you are missing the point. The Big Ten are losing control. Dunkelzahn's legacy, Deus and the Renraku arcology shutdown, Winternight, Crash 2.0, Emergence, the Dragon Civil War, then CFD which was likely released by one of the megacorps in power. Now the Boston Lockdown, hushed up by the Corporate Court. The Revision has bought them time, but—if at all—they are just patching up a system that ended working a long time ago. The gods of old have grown weak. There is even a rumor that one of them may fall. That would have never even been thinkable when those seven original corporations or their predecessors founded the Inter-Corporate Council.

[P2]: So you are rallying my corporation's support to bring one your corporations into the CC?

[P1]: On the contrary. Our corporations have abandoned the fool's errand to gain triple-A status. What we are proposing is much more radical. A restart of the system—or at least an evolution of the system from a megacorporate tyranny to something more democratic that is able to balance out any extremes and provide the global political and economic stability for corporations to flourish.

[P2]: That sounds quite corporate utopian to me.

[P3]: No, my dear. We are realists. Even with a new system there will be competition and—on occasion—corporate war, obvious or in the shadows. However, the framework will be much more stable and less prone to subversion of the ones in power, who make use of the system at their own bidding and change the rules when it is advantageous for them.

[P2]: So you are proposing a distribution of power.

[P1]: Essentially yes. There are good examples that work well and have not degenerated like the Corporate Court. The Pacific Prosperity Group, the NEEC, the Philike Hetaeria, or corporate governing bodies like the Manhattan Development Consortium or the Europort Administrative Ruling Council are associations that work together toward the same goal, albeit in a specifically described geographical area. We need something more global.

[P2]: How?

[P4]: This is why we are here. To devise a strategy that we can make work without putting the decisive powers into the hands of a selected few. A corporate junta is what we already have. We need something bigger. As you say, distribution of power. Our clandestine group meets regularly in parallel to conferences like the one going on now to discuss strategies and how to implement them. One model we have been discussing is a senate-like approach, in which all AA+ corporations including the Big Ten hold power based on their economic value. This corporate senate would supersede the Corporate Court, meaning the Big Ten will be very resistant as it dilutes their power extensively. Another model, one that was once publicly proposed by Monobe and Zeta-ImpChem, is the House of Commons-approach where the AA corporations would have a body that would be subordinate to the CC. However, the House of Commons would select one of their own, an AA-spokescorporation to sit on all Corporate Court meetings to be a voice of the lesser corporations.

[P2]: Sounds like a reasonable proposal. How did the Corporate Court react to such a suggestion?

[P3]: Many AA corporations agreed that it seemed reasonable. Therefore the CC gave both Z-IC and Monobe a slap on the wrist and made it very clear that they will not tolerate further attempts to "agitate other corp's."

[P2]: That explains our need for secrecy.

[P1]: Indeed.

[P4]: Whatever our final model will be dependent on the circumstances,during which we can attempt to implement them. The weaker the Corporate Court will be when we make our move, the easier it will be. There is one thing I would like to make clear, though—we don't want to stage a coup. We want the members of the Corporate Court to understand that the system they create is failing. And if governments start to oppose the whole system implemented by the Business Recognition Accords, it will get worse. To achieve the revolution, we need support, cooperation, and alignment between some of the most influential AA corporations. The others will fall in line if our alliance is strong enough, and we can enter negotiations with the CC. This is why—in essence—you are here.

For you personally to join our ranks and your corporation to join this union for a new future of the corporate system.

[P2]: A very risky endeavor. What securities do we have that the whole thing does not backfire and lead to an omega order against us or you?

[P4]: Very true. Eventually we will need to take the risk and come out of the shadows to oppose the Corporate Court. At that point it will be all or nothing. The imperative is that we keep it quiet until then, to stack the cards in our favor and rally the support we need. With regards to the securities you are asking for—it will be a matter how well we manage to maintain secrecy. Only a few individuals in the company near the top of the food chain will know the whole truth, and they will be backed up by their management, who themselves will have no deep knowledge about what is exactly going on for maximum deniability. These individuals in every corporation will make sure that resources get diverted to obfuscate data and money trails via black ops divisions where nobody comes asking questions. Elements of our work such as strategic assessments, simulations, and intelligence acquisition can be provided by proxies who think they work on a company project. Those of us in the know meet on a regular basis under false pretext, and we meet in person to limit data interception. We bring the pieces and findings together, discuss and devise new objectives to be finalized until the next gathering. Shadow resources will be assigned to maintain physical, technical, and astral security during our meetings. Data will be pooled, changed, and shared by ad hoc computer systems, which are only accessible by special marks and biometric locked cable connection at the meeting site and disconnected from the Matrix. Data will only be transported encrypted within the memory of datajacks that will be implanted in you, so every Syndexioi has a copy. We have a few additional surprises in stock to prevent the operation from being jeopardized by anyone falling into enemy hands. We will brief you on the whole risk management and strategies at a later time.

[P1]: You may not survive it, but it will ensure that nothing can be traced back to your employer and even if there are suspicions no evidence remains.

[P4]: Our precautions may be extreme, but there is a high probability that information will be picked up by any of the Big Ten's capable intelligence divisions eventually, no matter how unobtrusive we will appear. We hope that they are currently too entangled with the Boston situation to notice but there are no guarantees. As not all corporations will be willing to join our cause, some may go running to the Big Ten to rat us out. This is why picking the right conniver corporations will be key. Profiling potential targets and their owners / board members and pitch our proposal to them will be an important task before we can extend the operations. Still, our best chances remain when the numbers of confidants are kept to a minimum and everyone is able to maintain the secret.

[P3]: As you can imagine, these security measure are costly, which is why we requested the non-traceable funding of five million nuyen, also to show your companies' commitment to join the cause.

[P2]: I can wire the money securely. As indicated before by my superiors, we have no love for most members of the Corporate Court. Given what I have heard today, I am are happy to join. I have a few others that could strengthen the group's undertaking.

[P1]: Great. If you agree, we stop here. The runners will escort you to a nearby clinic where we have made the necessary preparations to equip you with the necessary implants. We will then resume our conversation tomorrow under more secure conditions in a virtual data room.

:: end file

Crazy fraggers. A plot against the Corporate Court. They must have a serious death wish. Loonies.
Bull

Many big AA corporations have been screwed over by the megas multiple times like Z-IC, Monobe, Universal Omnitech, Maersk IA, Yakashima, Sony, just to name a few. Still, I would have never thought that they would cooperate to challenge the CC. Syndexioi is greek and means "united by the handshake," a term that was used by Mithraic cults in the past, going back to the traditional way of concluding a treaty or signifying some solemn understanding between two parties.
Fianchetto

I would worry more about who recorded the file in the first place. One of the ones in the background? Shadowrunners? Or has the CC already gotten wind of this?
Thorn

From what my sources tell me, they know that something is in the bushes. Most of them think it has something to do of a number of corporations merging into a AAA and rallying support though. Nothing on this level of insane. And with S-K Prime occupied by their own internal witch hunt, even the dragon's spies have not picked this up. From what we know at least.
Fianchetto

So how did you acquire the file, for which the megas were willing to shut down a marketplace which they frequently used themselves to acquire dirt and nasty little secrets?
Slamm0!

If you must know I have good connections to Synner, Drackenfelts, and their crew directly and via BX. None of them were amused by the stunt the megas pulled and the shit that has rained down on them since then. They were able to provide a data trail that led me to the Seoul-

Incheon Megaplex. Given that there was only one obvious candidate, and since I am a curious person who sticks his nose where it does not belong, I used local sources to retrieve the file offline from EasternTiger's local site.
Glitch

BACKGROUND

Over the past few decades, several major AA corporations have become dissatisfied with the autarchy and despotism of the Corporate Court. Zeta-ImpChem, which has always been the likeliest prospect of grabbing a seat in the Corporate Court after failing to seize it in the '40s due to the Polydopa Scandal (brought to light by at least one of the Big Seven, who did not want Z-IC to join their ranks), was never given a further chance and got stonewalled by megacorporate bureaucracy whenever they tried. Since the '50s, Monobe International has been on the cusp of gaining a seat on the Corporate Court but was screwed over at every opportunity despite promises by the AAA Japanacorps and other backroom negotiations. Other powerful or diversified AAs like Universal Omnitech, Maersk Incorporated Assets, Yakashima Technologies, Frankfurt Bank Association, Hildebrandt-Kleinford-Bernal, and Eastern Tiger Corporation suffered the same fate over the years and were targeted by megacorporations when growing above a certain thresholds that would have eventually brought them into the AAA league.

When Horizon nabbed the seat on the Corporate Court in the wake of Crash 2.0 without a fair assessment of all the potential candidates, it left all these corporations disenfranchised in their dealings with the Corporate Court. When Z-IC and Monobe made a public move using their leverage with Eurocorps and Japanocorps to campaign for a reorganization of the Corporate Court with a "House of Commons" and got threatened by an Omega Order, it became evident that a more clandestine undertaking was required.

As a result the Syndexioi, high-ranking officials from a number of AA corporations, were formed as a clandestine group to conspire against the current powers-that-be. While not planning a coup against the Corporate Court per se, they are planning—in a nutshell—to transform or revolutionize the structure of a governing body consisting of selected few into a council of many, thereby diluting the Triple-As extensive powers. To this end, the conspirators are currently lobbying for support and extension of their ranks. While five AA corporations have joined the conspiracy so far (though their identities are shrouded in secrecy), and the group consists of around fifteen to twenty conspirators in total, the Syndexioi are setting up meetings around the globe to exchange information and discuss next steps as well as deal with potential new prospects. Since the Corporate Court would certainly retaliate against the involved corporations if they ever found out about such an undertaking (which is essentially high treason of the corporate world), the runners will be tasked to run security during a meeting taking place in in the South Asian corporate island state of Singapore.

However, while the Corporate Court has no concrete suspicion yet, Xiao-Renraku's new Market Research Group and Shiwase MIFD were tasked to look for emerging patterns in global data on behalf of C5 in the wake of the Boston Lockdown and the Megacorporate Revision. Having access to all Matrix flow data via the CCMA, the Global SIN registry all other kinds of data from local grids, Renraku eventually picked up a data spike of a pan-corporate meeting. Thinking that this meeting may be connected to a corporate merger, they have sent an operative to investigate.

However, due to certain circumstances beyond the runners' control, it will not the only obstacles they will have to overcome during the week in order to bring the assignment to a successful end.

PLOT POINT 1

WELCOME TO SINGAPORE INC.

The runners are contacted by the fixers to meet Mr. Johnson in a virtual host, which has the nondescript iconography of a corporate office. The Johnson's persona, who looks and behaves like a Japanese sarariman, wants the runners to run the security for a secretive pan-corporate business meeting consisting of four to five attendees that will take place in the corporate state of Singapore in a couple of days. To conceal the negotiations from their competitors, the meeting will take place under the false pretext of a "Strategic Market Research Exchange Workshop" organized by a lobbyist outfit in Brussels E.C. named Goossens & Dupont (a company with some real employees in Brussels with no official ties to any megacorporation). To further obfuscate the meeting, it will take place in the Marina Bay Orchid (see below), a huge hotel/resort that has a number of convention facilities that are usually booked by a number of different companies. As the Pacific Prosperity Group is holding a summit at the Orchid's Expo & Convention Centre (the hotel will be crawling with corporate executives), it will further reduce the exposure of the meeting. Goossens & Dupont has rented a small, enclosed area of conference rooms that will be used during the meeting. Mr. Johnson wants the runners to take care of physical, technical, and magical security of the environment and protect all members of the entourage at all costs. Mr. Johnson will provide transport to Singapore by commercial airlines and is willing to pay the runners 3,000 nuyen per runner per day for their services. Runners may negotiate (Opposed Negotiation Test vs. a dice pool of 10; only bonuses that virtually apply can be used for this test). On request the digital Johnson is willing to provide an ex-

pense account of 20,000 nuyen that any member of the team can use. If the runners agree, they will meet with the other members (described below) at Changi Airport to arrange transport to the Orchid.

At the Orchid the runners can liaise with hotel security, which requires a SIN verification check with an appropriate license as bodyguard or security provider against a scanner with a Rating of 5 (p. 368, *SR5*) to get vetted and gain access to some the hotel's security systems (cameras restricted to some of the floors, internal information exchange).

PLOT POINT 2

SPRAWLGUERILLA CROSSFIRE

The meeting will start internally the next day with the rented conference room located in the vicinity to the PPG summit. Negotiations between the Syndexioi will purely be virtual in an enclosed system set up Mun-Hee Kaibuchi-Choi (with tech brought in by every member), to which all attendees will link via a cabled connection with their datajacks for maximum security (biometrically secured). They will only emerge for coffee breaks and lunch served by members of the hotel staff (gamemasters are encouraged to make the runners nervous and paranoid as personal will be constantly changing) and will close the meeting late to go to dinner in the hotel and then retreat to their rooms. During one of the next two days, the hotel will become the target of an anti-corporate group known in Singapore as Barisan Kongsi (see below), which has been planning an assault of this "den of corporate domination" for a while. As they will be mainly target the summit with their hacks, shooting, and bombings to create as much mayhem as possible, the people the runners are guarding entourage will be caught in the crossfire. Even if the runners react to the threat by eliminating barisan kongsi activists it will cause much unwanted attention on the runners and the meeting by media and Indrajit law enforcement that will come in to question the runners.

PLOT POINT 3

DOPPELGANGER DISTRESS

On Day Three, two of the runners will be tasked to bring in another attendee who will arrive at Changi Airport from Frankfurt in the late night, and bring her to the hotel to meet the other attendees in person the next morning. The attendee is an African-American mid-thirtyish corporate woman by the name of Christiana McNamara. What the runners don't know is that the original person was replaced by a doppelganger operative going by the name of Veltha, who is working on behalf of Renraku. Since her target knew little about

the meeting she was attending (it is a prospect assessment similar to the one mentioned in the introductory fiction), the operative is flying in blind and improvising, using the person's background information to keep up appearances. During her meeting with the Syndexioi on the next day, she realizes that this is much bigger than anticipated. Realizing that bailing out at this point might get her killed (given what she just learned), she agrees to join the conspiracy. However, as Syndexioi procedures require implantation of safety devices (such as a cortex bomb; see Plot Point 4) that will also diminish her magic, apart from her resuming her original form when getting anaesthetized for surgery, she will look for an exit strategy. As the runners are tasked to escort the candidate to a black clinic, where pre-arrangements have been made for the implantation, she will try to kill or incapacitate the runners and/or make a run for it using her talent for changing appearances to lose the runners, which could lead to a wild chase in the streets of Singapore.

If she manages to reach her employer, the corp will immediately start hiring a team for extraction of at least one of the other attendees for further interrogation. The same will happen if Veltha does not report in.

PLOT POINT 4

AAA–ARCANE ASSAULT & ABDUCTION

No matter how Plot Point 3 plays out, another local runner team will eventually come to intercept the entourage and try to snatch at least one member to bring him or her to Xiao-Renraku's local facility in Singapore, where she can be protected by corporate forces. The runners, however, will not be the biggest problem. Renraku did not hire the team directly; they hired local urban legend and sorcerer Dhalang, who is known for his uncommon tactics. He will command four bound Force 6 Possession spirits (exact nature up to the gamemaster's choice) to accompany his proxy team of runners during the extraction, which can be used to possess members of the opposing team, possess and raise dead bodies of the opposing team, possess members of the entourage (that then will try to escape), possess hotel staff members, or possess member of the player character's team to turn against the other players. For more information on Possession, see p.197, *Street Grimoire*. For the stats of the runner team, use the archteypes Combat Mage, Gunslinger Adept, Street Racer, Sprawl Ganger, and Weapons Specialist from *SR5* and *Run Faster*. All non-arcane runners have been spirit-marked for Possession by the Living Vessel Preparation Ritual (p. 135, *Street Grimoire*).

As all members of the Syndexioi have been implanted with several countermeasures to end their lives (or have their lives ended remotely) if captured, such as but not limited to an area cortex bomb that will also destroy the datajack, no further information will leak to Renraku even if the extraction is successful.

However, due to the two events, the meeting will be immediately disbanded, all devices destroyed, and all funds will be at the runner's disposal to bring everyone away from the island state as quickly as possible by non-official means, using local smuggler and pirates.

LOCATIONS

SINGAPORE INCORPORATED

Singapore is a bustling corporate enclave, an amalgamation of Eastern South-Asian atmosphere and Western capitalism, a melting port of different national and corporate cultures. Still a sovereign city-state and island country, the republic turned into an exterritorial corporation after Crash 1.0 and is still run by the Lee dynasty, who essentially owns the metroplex. Singapore is the largest and most modern port of Asia. It's a free port that re-exports more than half of what it imports. With more than 30,000 factories and deep-water wharves, the Jurong Industrial Estate is Mitsuhama's largest industrial complex, while Keppel Harbor is one of the world's largest container-handling facilities.

A number of different corporations have high-stakes labs and interest in the city state that is still a paradise for technology and science innovation. While corporations like MCT, Red Wheel Engineering (Wuxing), the Malaysian Independent Bank (Wuxing), Mangadyne, Z-IC, and Tan Tien Enterprises, who own the Sentosa Island arcology, are long-established players, rising corporations like Vedacorp (whose Indrajit subsidiary currently holds the policing contract), Tanamyre, and Global Sandstorm have been drawn to the commercial hub since Crash 2.0 as part of their expansion plan.

Singapore has a reputation for being a clean and orderly city with very strict laws and draconian punishments enforced by the police contractors and the Singaporean corporate military. Nevertheless, the metroxplex has a flourishing shadow economy and underworld, the latter of which is mostly dominated by the Hai San triad.

MARINA BAY ORCHID

The Orchid (former Sands) is an iconic five-to-six-star integrated hotel resort fronting Marina Bay and is currently run by a Singapore Inc. subsidiary that completely modernized and overhauled the hotel's exterior and interior after Crash 2.0 with the help of Prometheus Engineering. While still having the old but unique appearance of the three fifty-five-story towers capped by the Orchid SkyPark, which next to a beautiful rainforest arboretum and the largest artificial rooftop lagoon offers 360-degree views of Singapore's skyline (two hundred meters above the city-state), the hotel's base-level buildings and underground levels were even

further expanded. While open to the public, the Orchid is kind of a mini-arcology; along with more than three thousand luxury rooms and suites, hotel amenities, and convention and exhibition facilities is home to 2 night clubs, an underground shopping mall, a casino, a museum, and a number of high-class restaurants.

PEOPLE

THE SYNDEXIOI ENTOURAGE

The Syndexioi entourage consists of four people, all of who wear expensive corporate chic clothing. They engage only in small talk in presence of the runners, but treat them well and with respect (they know that their life and the secrecy depends on them). While their clothing reveals nothing about their corporate affiliation, runners who are looking for cues may make some guesses [the information they might discover is contained in brackets] based on corporate attitude and culture on the individuals' origin when succeeding in an appropriate Corporate Knowledge Skill + Intuition [6] Test. All members use fake corporate SINs issued on different names and representing empty shell corporations.

The four members are:

Sanjeev Patel (Male): A slim, Indian, clean-shaven human in his mid-forties with no accent who speaks English but also Hindi and Tamil. Very concise attitude, highly accurate, very punctual and ordered. [Likely belongs to a Eurocorp, probably Northern European, could be Saeder-Krupp, AG Chemie, Frankfurt Bank Association, Maersk IA, HKB, Z-IC or Regulus Joint Industries].

Florence Ruffiex (Female): Florence is an elf (age hard to determine) with a strong French accent who also speaks fluent Mandarin and Russian. Talks a lot with her hands as a ruse but is very observant about people, environment, and details. Asks a lot of question to get as much information as possible. Military or intelligence background. [She originates from a company with assets within or close to France, where French is part of corporate culture such as Z-IC, Aerospatiale, Renault-Fiat, Esprit/Dassault (now Aztechnology), Index-Axa, ESUS, Spinrad Industries, or former Cross-now-Ares assets].

Aponi Fuentes (Female): Half Latina, half Native American (Sioux) in her late-thirties. Very arrogant, fact-based scientific attitude that can be grating. Highly educated (probably PhD) with a lot of factual knowledge about augmentations and other forms of technology. [Belongs to a "science corp" such as Genesis Consortium, Z-IC, Universal Omnitech, Phoenix Biotechnologies, Tan Tien, or Proteus].

Mun-Hee Kaibuchi-Choi (Male): Ethnic Asian mix of Korean, Chinese, and Japanese. Calm, sometimes reclusive in personal interactions; does not talk much, generally only responding when asked. Very tech and computer oriented; tech-talk can break the ice. [Belongs to an Asian corporation, probably with a strong tech culture such as Renraku, MCT, Monobe, Eastern Tiger Corporation, ShinSiam, Sony, Wuxing].

BARISAN KONGSI

Malay for "Corporate Front," barisan kongsi is a local radical branch of the Chinese 9x9, also affiliated with other anti-corporate groups such as Attack! and Malaysian neo-communist policlubs that support the group's agenda with funding and weapons. Since its rise in the '70s, the group has gained a bad reputation for direct attacks on corporate facilities all over the island including bombings, sabotage hacks, gas attacks, shootings, and targeted assault (including murder) of corporate executives. They have therefore been labeled as terrorists by Singpore Inc. and associated law enforcement. While Barison Kongsi never target civilians directly, they are known tolerate collateral damage of those that willingly live in a corporate tyranny. During attacks barisan kongsi activists wear ballistic masks to hide their identity. Like most extremists, they are willingly to die for their cause if necessary.

BARISAN KONGSI DIRECT ACTION ACTIVIST

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 3)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
5	5	5	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Initiative	[illegible]
Condition Monitor	[illegible]
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 5, Social 6
Armor	9
Skills	Automatics 5, Computer 3, Demolitions 4, Pilot Groundcraft 3, Perception 4, Pistols 4, Unarmed Combat 3
Gear	Armored vest, commlink (Device Rating 3), spare ammo clip
Weapons	Browning Ultra-Power [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(6), DV 8P AP –1, SA, RC —,10(c)] Uzi [Submachine Gun, Acc 4(5), DV 7P, AP —, BF, RC 1, 24(c)]

Four of the activists have improved explosive devices [18P(f), AP +5, Blast -1 per meter] strapped to their chests that they mean to explode when reaching a group of executives or a conference room.

BARISAN KONGSI HACTIVIST

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 3)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
3	3	3	2	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Initiative	8 + 1D6 (Matrix 10 + 4D6)
Condition Monitor	10 / 11
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 7, Social 5
Armor	9
Skills	Automatics 2, Cybercombat 4, Electronics skill group 5, Electronic Warfare 3, Hacking 5, Perception 3
Augmentation	Datajack
Cyberdeck	Novatech Navigator [Rating 3, Attack 3, Firewall 4, Processing 5, Sleaze 6(7)]
Loaded Programs	Demolition, Exploit, Stealth
Gear	Armored vest, commlink (Device Rating 4, hot-sim modified)
Weapons	Uzi [Acc 4(5), DV7P, AP —, BF, RC 1, 24(c)]

THE OPPOSITION

DHALANG

The mysterious (probably Indonesian) magician known as Dhalang never engages actively in a mission but remains in the background working through spirits and local proxies. Naming himself after the role of the head puppeteer in the Indonesian Wayang theater, he is indeed a master of wayang kulit (shadow puppet). Following a rare Possession tradition of Southeast Asia, he is able to conjure and bind spirits of water, beast, plant, guardian, and air. He is an expert ritual spellcaster, alchemist, and conjurer, but due to the short notice of his involvement, he will not be able to use all of his skills to their full potential.

In business for more than three decades, he carefully deals with both his employers and proxies, who are only able to describe him as a grey, shadowy figure.

MALE HUMAN

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
2	4	4	3	6	6	5	4	4	6.0	8

Initiative	9 + 1D6
Condition Monitor	9 / 11
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 8, Social 7
Armor	9
Skills	Astral Combat 5, Conjuring skill group 8, Enchanting skill group 7, Intimidation 4, Perception 6, Pistols 2, Sorcery skill group7, Sneaking 6
Initiate Grade	4
Metamagic	Centering, Flexible Signature, Masking, Quickening
Spells	Chaotic World, Control Thoughts, Detect Enemies (Extended), Detect Life (Extended), Heal, Improved Invisibility, Increase Reflexes, Lightning Bolt, Manabolt, Manaball, Silence, Stunbolt
Qualities	Combat Paralysis, Focused Concentration 4
Gear	Armored vest, contacts [Capacity 3, w/ image link, vision enhancement 2], 5 jade charms [summoning foci (air, beast, guardian, plant, water), all Force 4)
Weapons	Yamaha Pulsar [Taser, Acc 5, DV 7S(e), AP –5, SA, RC —, 4(m)

VELTHA

Veltha is a professional freelance doppelganger, a skilled infiltrator, and assassin. An ambigender androgyne raised on the streets of Caracas zir Awakening prevented zir from a fate of becoming a muñeca (a custom-shaped bioshaped doll prostitute) for the Cartels and gave Veltha a purpose and exit strategy out of the favelas as an infiltrator and covert ops specalist in the shadows of Latin America. Never much of a team player, ze joined the ranks of open-minded Evo a couple of years later whose black operations division trained zir into a deadly operative and corporate killer. Since a couple of years ze now works freelance again, working mostly for megacorporations, government intelligence devisions, and organized crime syndicates that able to provide zir with challenging assignments and can pay zir price. Veltha's signature is a RFID-embedded card displaying a cloud of Latin words which can be shaped in the sentence "In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas" ("I intend to speak of forms changed into new entities"), a reference to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

When encountered unchanged, Veltha appears as an average-height, androgynous Latin-American with short black straight hair who is genetically female. If uncovered, Veltha will try to escape or hide to change zir appearance rather than engage in physical combat.

ANDROGYNOUS HUMAN

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
3 (6)	5	4 (5)	4 (7)	6	4	5	6	4	6.0	8

Initiative	10 (11) + 2D6
Condition Monitor	10 (11) / 11
Limits	Physical 5 (9), Mental 7, Social 8 [9]
Armor	8
Skills	Athletics skill group 6, Computer 4, Con 8, Demolitions 3, Disguise 8 [12], Escape Artist 5, Etiquette 6 [7] (Corporate +2), Impersonation 10, Negotiation 6 [7], Palming 7, Pistols 6 [8] (Called Shots +2), Sneaking 5, Unarmed Combat 4 (Block +2)
Initiate Grade	4
Metamagic	Adept centering, masking, extended masking (the fourth level of initiation was used for a power point)
Powers	Attribute Boost [Agility] 2, Cool Resolve 1, Body Sculpt, Demara, Facial Sculpt 2, Improved Ability (Pistols) 2, Improved Reflexes 1, Kinesics 2, Linguistics 2, Melanin Control, Voice Control 2
Qualities	First Impression, Photographic Memory, Trustworthy, Code of Honor, Signature
Gear	AR gloves, bracelet (Rating 6 qi focus, Improved Body 3), commlink (Device Rating 6), disguise kit, Mortimer of London Berwick Dress [+1 dice pool bonus to Social Tests when wireless], ring (Rating 6 qi focus, Improved Strength 3), signature cards
Weapons	Shiawase Puzzler [Light Pistol, Acc 4, DV 6P, AP —, SA, RC —, 12(c); Veltha uses Demara and a recording stored on her commlink to assemble the Puzzler with a Armor Skill of 1] Ares Light Fire 75 [Light Fire, Acc 6 (8), DV 6P, AP —, SA, RC —, 16 (c)]

MA-DNESS

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Chalmers & Cole? Great dragons?
Slamm0!

As if we would be telling. Secrecy and client protection are paramount in our line of work. This is why so many of you let us handle your portfolios.
0111011001

POSTED BY: €SPION

THE TIME FOR INVESTMENTS IS NOW!

Heard about the Megacorporate Revision? For Brokerage X, this is going to be an interesting time. When the first rumors about an audit emerged, stock markets all over the globe showed a substantial amount of movement. Now, with the formal announcement that this will really be happening, stock markets are going crazy in anticipation of what is going to happen. Whoever backs the right horse will make plenty of euro (or nuyen) in the next year. So can you! BX is a stock brokerage firm with a twist. The twist? Insider info. That's where you come in. You are on the front lines, gathering the best intel about what's happening out there.

There will be simple ones. A lot of corps are already engaging in dogfights, feeding off one another to cling to their status and privileges. These are simple to spot. With sabotage, smear campaigns, or extractions you might be directly involved. However, as these conflicts or hostile takeovers turn public quite quickly, they are—from a brokering point of view—only interesting on a very short-term view. You can make a quick buck, but be fast—your intel degrades quickly!

More interesting when it comes to long-term investments are mergers—essentially corporate marriages, the legal consolidation of two (or more) companies into one single entity. They are usually rare in megacorporate circles, but there's a good chance of one occurring in the next few months or years, and advance knowledge could be very lucrative. If they succeed.

The merger of two megacorporations is probably one of the most complex problems humanity ever had to resolve. That is why they are so rare. Negotiator teams review the value of each group down to the smallest subsidiary, the partnerships, overlapping interests, and every other technical issue. Legal contracts have to be rewritten, hundreds if not thousands of executives have to move to new position almost overnight, while sysops will try to connect grids and merge data.
Mr. Bonds

> And a new corporate doctrine that speaks to all employees needs to emerge. This is why the merger of Novatech and Transys-Erika into NeoNET just after Transys Neuronet and Erika had merged was such a huge fuck-up. While operationally working nowadays, the corp still carries the baggage of employees not embracing the unified corporate identity, which led to corporate trench warfare between factions from the three founder companies.
> /dev/grrl

Again, this is where you come in. These mergers are usually secretly negotiated at very high levels to keep the event under the wraps as long as possible before the deal is struck and officially announced (at which time the stock usually starts rising, when the markets see the same benefit as the companies). You may be hired to gather intel on such clandestine meetings or run security to prevent information from leaking out. Tell us what you learn. Any information you pick up may turn into profit beyond your standard payment by Mr. Johnson. You may even get hired to sabotage such merger undertakings by competitors. Nobody wants to face an even bigger competitor that results from a merger. Have you and your team been successful? Let us know.

> Indeed, the revision may have given the Big Ten more than they bargained for. If two already-big AA corporations decided to merge, a new triple-A player may arise on the playing field, no matter how the CC has set the bar. The reasons megacorporations merge include geographical or other diversification, increased market share, economic benefit (e.g., increasing or decreasing the scope of marketing and distribution), or true synergy (i.e., if something emerges that is much bigger than just the sum of its parts). Think Universal Omnitech and Z-IC merging. Or Yakashima, Monobe, or Sony. Or HBK and the FBA.
> Baka Dabora

> This is why €spion is right saying that runners may get hired to throw a monkey wrench into the negotiations. If the Big Ten get wind of a merger that would produce a triple-A or even an AA that might be a strong competitor or mess with their own takeover plans, they will send runners to thwart that merger.
> Thorn

In return we take care of all the digital paperwork for you, making you invisible in the process. We are using the very best shells, double blinds, and front men money can buy to handle our transactions through licensed brokerage houses—making them virtually untraceable, even with the new Matrix standards. You get complete deniability, as always.

This is the time for you to make money.

Big time!

> So okay, €spion, spill the beans. What mergers are currently underway?
> Glitch

> Given that we manage the portfolios of most people on this network, I am willing to make an exception and provide some free information. One that has been discussed since after Crash 2.0 is the merger of Spanish Meridional Agronomics and French Renault-Fiat. Since the Frankfurt Bank Association became a significant shareholder in both companies (via the Banco Español takeover), it has been engineering this deal. Both companies had partnerships before. Renault-Fiat, as the world leader in agriculture vehicles and equipment through CNH, was a key supplier of Meridional Agronomics, while experts from Meridional worked with Renault-Fiat's subsidiary Michelin in its rubber trees plantations in Amazonia (one of the few industries that is eco-friendly enough to suit the local government). The deal was still in negotiation last we heard, but given the circumstances, they might be more aggressive now. Due to Renault-Fiat's failures of the recent years, they are the weakest link in the merger. The whole deal could fall apart if Renault-Fiat gets dragged into a takeover war.
> €spion

Both ESUS and Aztechnology (via Esprit) might take a shot at them for business reasons, although I am not sure they will take on the FBA, who is pulling the strings. In any case, the merger will also have an impact on the NEEC Corporate Policy Commission, not only due to the economic power of this corporation in Southern Europe, but also due to one seat that becomes vacant when the two merge.
Cosmo

Another potential merger that you hear rumors about in Europe is between German arms manufacturer and military technology A-level corporation Ruhrmetall and French defense AA Aerospatiale. Ruhrmetall recently made the headlines by acquiring BuMoNA (armed medical services and health care provider) while it was under fire from competitors, a deal also engineered by the FBA, who is—again—a major shareholder in both companies. Between them, the FBA and Ruhrmetall also hold the majority of shares in MET2000 (which owns Argus), next to the German government, who is the biggest single shareholder. Apparently the FBA is looking to form a new French-German defense giant, which could be groomed into the above-mentioned vacant seat in the NEEC working together with Banco Occidental (owned by the Bourbon family) to make the deal a reality.
€spion

Apparently the FBA is also using its whole lobbying apparatus in Brussels and Hanover to get the AGS government and recently elected German chancellor Anikka Beloit to bring its shares in MET2K to the table and integrate the merc company into this new corporation in exchange for shares.
Ecoptope

Saeder-Krupp will step in at some point to intervene. The only question is whether the shit that will rain down on these three corps will come from a pan-European shadow war or literal fire and brimstone by a majorly pissed-off great dragon.
Bull

Beyond Europe there have been some flares of activity in California and India with respect to a potential merger between A-level Amalgamated Studios and Bollywood AA Regency Megamedia, as Horizon is constantly stripping AS of its most profitable assets. There have also been talks between DocWagon and the Sri-Lankan AA Vedacorp, between Australian Tanamyre Resources and Thai ShinSiam, and between Lockheed and Federated Boeing, but these could all be just be partnerships and cooperations. So no big one yet that would shake heaven and earth. At least none we have heard of.
€spion

BACKGROUND

Amalgamated Studios was once a well-respected AA corporation that dominated the Hollywood trid and sim scene for more than thirty years until Horizon emerged as new rising star of the media world, eating away at Amalgamated's businesses and taking over its assets. Since Crash 2.0, during which Amalgamated took a serious blow, Horizon took over four of its largest studios including Virtual World Disney, poached a number of actors, musicians and other talent, and effectively downgraded the corporation to A-level status. Being under constant pressure by Horizon, who is planning to ultimately incorporate Amalgamated into their entertainment branch, Amalgamated has been struggling for survival. Horizon, however, never made a serious takeover attempt, letting Amalgamated Studios stir, struggle, and exhaust itself to reduce the value of the company so it could gain a stronger position in takeover negotiations in the future. Then, however, came Regency Megamedia. Already involved in Seattle's United Corporate Council due to their stronghold of Megamedia in North America, the Indian Bollywood AA looking for expansion stepped in as white knight, secretly offering the Amalgamated management a "merger among equals" (which was not entirely true, but still likely better than being swallowed whole by Horizon), if negotiations could be closed with satisfaction for both parties. In the recent months both corporations started an internal evaluation of all assets (mostly taking place in the Mumbai sprawl) without the black knight noticing, as Horizon was too caught up with the repercussions from the Az-Am War and the Boston hush-up.

Due to the Megacorporate Revision, however, Regency has pushed up the timetables to be ready if called in early for re-evaluation. As more people were brought in to the project to carry the workload in a shorter time frame, information started to leak out to Horizon, forcing the hand of the megacorp to prevent the merger.

Horizon plans to hire the runners to sabotage the undertaking, carrying out three missions that will damage both the business and reputation of Amalgamated (and Regency) in the process. Horizon's goal is to make Amalgamated unattractive as an acquisition target in public so that Regency will retract from the merger to prevent their own shares from being dragged down. If the runners are successful, they will badly damage Amalgamated in the process.

PLOT POINT 1

WHITE ANGEL, BLACK KNIGHT

The runners are contacted by their fixers to go to Los Angeles to meet with Ms. Johnson, a young, very im-

age-conscious female ogre working for Horizon who might have jumped from a metahuman *Vogue* cover. The runners meet her for lunch or dinner in a green-themed restaurant called Grown Authentics in Downtown LA, run by an organic cooperative known to have ties to Horizon's Wind River Corporation. Ms. Johnson wants the runners to stay in LA on retainer to sabotage the merger talks between Amalgamated and Regency. This will lead to three runs with short timetables. The longer the runners wait to execute the plans, the higher the chance they will miss the window for each run, and that legal documents will be signed between the two corporations that could complicate matters exponentially. She tries to impress urgency in the runners, telling them to pursue the targets as aggressively as possible. Ms. Johnson is willing to pay 5,000 nuyen per runner for each job, and the fee can be renegotiated between runs (Negotiation + Charisma Opposed Test against a dice pool of 13 [Social Limit 8]; the gamemaster may allow for additional bonus dice in tests for later runs if the runners excelled in one of the earlier ones).

If the runners do not already know (and they should, if they are messing around in downtown LA), Ms. Johnson will also remind them of the pervasiveness of sensors throughout the core parts of the city (such as the ACPS), as well as the use of P2.0 among LA's society (in a nutshell, it's a glitterati self-advertisement software platform that conveys your personal social importance, which is used as a reputation, ranking, and networking system). As non-participation in P2.0 might raise some suspicion during the run, the runners may want to blend in while operating in the city. For simplicity, treat a fake P2.0 profile as a dedicated fake SIN of at least Rating 4 with an associated license of at least the same rating; that should be sufficient to pass by without gaining too much attention (fake identities would be something

like a wannabe simsense actress or a mediocre trideo screenplay writer). As the system is controlled by Horizon, the runners can negotiate some leeway while in the megacorp's service, giving them a +2 dice pool bonus on any SIN/P2.0 check while on the run.

For additional information on Los Angeles, Horizon, and Amalgamated Studios, refer to *Corporate Enclaves* and *Corporate Guide*.

AUTOMATED CRIME PREVENTION SYSTEM—ACPS (DOWNTOWN, LA)

The ACPS is a Horizon-devised system, installed throughout the sprawl in the early '70s. It is an intelligent system with an AI in its core processing network. Sensors embedded in buildings, streetlamps, sidewalks, and even palm trees provide a comprehensive, 360-degree view of the street and ground floors. The full sensor units analyze people and vehicles and can pick up images, sounds, body temperatures, obvious cyberware, concealed weapons, and on some occasions pheromone sniffers and chemical scanners. Based on the accumulated data, the system sends out appropriate responses via drones, police units, mages and/or spirits, or simply AR communications. For example, if it senses a person in physical distress, reads on their ID that they are diabetic, and accesses the person's biometric RFID tag to verify the medical condition, it immediately sends paramedics. The response time varies depending on the urgency of the situation. The system generally allows the Pueblo Corporate Council to provide minimal policing support to the area while maximizing response time and providing appropriate response levels. The system, however, became somewhat compromised when the CFD virus began infecting the ACPS system. While Horizon is working to isolate and exchange the infected parts, the system is still known to malfunction on occasion in 2077, to the benefit of criminal elements and shadowrunner's throughout the sprawl.

PLOT POINT 2

HERETIC EDUTAINMENT

A substantial portion of Amalgamated Studios' current market is the production of edutainment videos for other corporations, portraying the values and behaviors of their corporate ideologies and doctrines. The videos are primarily produced by a subsidiary, Global Studios, and they just finished a batch of new edutainment videos for Aztechnology, glorifying the achievements in the Az-Am War, to be disseminated to all megacorporate divisions and subsidiaries in the next three days. Horizon wants the runners to break into the Global Studios building twice: First, they have to steal the final recordings and deliver them to a Pathfinder Multimedia contact without anyone noticing. Second, they have to sneak altered versions—reproduced and integrated with an anti-Aztechnology subliminal meme—back into the system, and install a Horizon program into the Global Studios host while they're at it. Altering the recording will take Pathfinder twenty-four hours.

As the Global Studios host is not connected to the local grid, the runners have to break into Studio City (i.e., Hollywood), a huge, walled-off corporate enclave that houses both Horizon and Amalgamated Studios assets, and access the host from within Global Studies directly to retrieve and place the files. The host where the files are stored can be accessed from any networked device within the Global Studios office building [Host Rating 8; Attack 10, Sleaze 8, Data Processing 9, Firewall 11] with Patrol IC always active. When the host starts launching IC, it will launch Track, then Probe, and then Sparky. The host will continue to launch IC at a detected intruder with a preference for the Track program, which it will launch whenever the program is available, for physical security to take down the intruders. All intrusion countermeasures are located on p. 248, *SR5*.

Because Global Studios was dedicated to nature shows and documentaries in the past, the host is sculpted like a Geosphere Park, hosting different habitats with mundane animals and paracritters. IC is shaped in the form of park rangers. The edutainment files the runners are looking can be found in an Aztec pyramid, located in a Mesoamerican landscape of the host's iconography.

The file bundle that includes all the edutainment videos in question has been protected by its owner and has a Protection Rating of 7 (p. 239, *SR5*). It needs to be cracked before it can be copied and edited. To install the Horizon program (a self-executable worm, which a decker can discover with a successful Software + Logic [Mental] (4) or Matrix Perception (4) Test), a successful Edit File action is required.

If the runners are successful, the relationship between Aztechnology and Amalgamated Studios will turn sour over the messed-up work, and Aztechnology will terminate their contract with AS. Additionally, over the next few days the Horizon worm will make its way from Global Studios to the Amalgamated Studios host, collecting confidential internal e-mail and other information about Amalgamated's questionable legal practices, treatment of actors, and personal negative views that AS managers have expressed about the merger with Regency and the integration of a Indian corporate

doctrine. Horizon will use that leaked data, which was never meant to be publicized, to tarnish the public image of Amalgamated and drive a wedge between both corporations and their merger.

PLOT POINT 3

SPANNER IN THE WORKS

Crash 2.0 was crucial in initiating Amalgamated's fall. Due to poor security and bad backup habits, Amalgamated lost terapulses of data when its hosts were hit by the Dissonance Worm. Nearly every project that was in production or about to be released was lost, and a substantial portion of their archives was also corrupted. Amalgamated became heavily dependent upon recovered and surviving materials from their still-vast archives. With the emergence of technomancers, the management of Amalgamated began grasping the thin straw that lost data might still be reconstructed by technomancer abilities or recovered from esoteric places such as the Resonance Realms, one of the metaphysical places of the Matrix. Hiring consultants from Aegis Cognito, which specializes in data recovery, they formed the Noosphere Reconstruction Initiative (NRI) as a research project with technomancer students from CalTech. While the project initially came up empty-handed and was on the brink of being disbanded multiple times, it recently bore fruit when Xianbing Zheng, a submerged technomancer from Singapore, joined CalTech as an associate professor and brought in a fresh view. Since the revenues that could be generated from the recovery of this data are estimated to be in the millions of nuyen (which is why Regency wants to move the project fully out of academia and into the private sector), Horizon wants the NRI shut down and all corrupted servers that the IT specialists and technomancers have been working on (which act as some kind of metaphysical "anchor" of the data, according to a CalTech hypothesis) destroyed. A few days after the Global Studios run, the runners have to go to the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, enter the secured lab facilities (with Rating 4 maglocks, cameras, physical corporate security, p. 382, *SR5*), and rig them with explosives to shatter all hopes of Amalgamated ever recovering access to their data. Since some of the storage devices are kept in a secured vault on site, the runners have to crack the door (maglock Rating 5, with anti-tamper circuits 2 and biometric reader) or weld through it without setting off the alarm.

Note that due to its successful arcane study program and partnerships with other corporate facilities and governmental atomic research (and the fact that it stores uranium on site), CalTech benefits from a quick security response. Mages, spirits, police, and corporate SWAT teams can be quickly on the scene if the runners draw too much attention or create a ruckus in the Amalgamated-connected labs.

If successful, Horizon will use the accident in the lab to cover the research project and publicly question the path forward for Amalgamated in light of this setback in one of their business trideo magazines, which causes the stock of Amalgamated to decrease further.

PLOT POINT 4

THE SEX SCANDAL

As a motivational bonus for the good work in the last month and to deepen the relationship of both companies, Amalgamated and RMM are hosting a party in the next days for a number of valued executives and special guests. Due to the delicate nature of the party—it is basically run by Amalgamated's adult-entertainment subsidiary Magic Minds, and attendees include its hard-core simstars and a number of escorts—Magic Minds rented the three penthouses of the Baltimore Towers (see below) and turned them into a glamorous burlesque-themed party location. As Regency has a connection to the Shotozumi-gumi in Seattle, a number of bunraku puppets will also be brought in for personal entertainment. Shirdi Bedi, son of Regency President/CEO Kabir Bedi, is attending the party, so security will be provided by Regency's Ghatak corporate forces.

Horizon wants the runners to enter the party and bring some juicy footage on Bedi and Amalgamated execs with prostitutes that can be used to cause a scandal both here and, especially, in Indian Union. To be sure that the party turns out to be an orgy worth filming, Horizon wants the runners to get creative and spice up the party by amplifying everyone's sex drive. This can, for example, be achieved either with chemical drugs such as the aphrodisiacs eX (cooked synthetically) or galak (made from the pollen of an Awakened orchid), or with direct magic or alchemical preparations utilizing spells such as Mob Mood or Opium Den, which can be used to increase libido and sexual desire. The main difficulty the runners will face on this run is getting into the party unnoticed, as most guests are familiar with each other.

If the runners are successful, it will be a huge victory for the runners and Horizon on multiple levels. While it damages AS reputation in LA and Tinseltown, it will cause a major scandal for Regency in Bollywood, Mumbai, and the Indian Union due to several still-pervasive taboos in India. In addition, since Shirdi Bedi is married to Nandita Kumar, daughter one of the DeMeKo AG's board members, the scandal will also poison the alliance between those two corporations.

LOCATIONS

THE BALTIMORE TOWERS

The three Baltimore Towers are skyscrapers in Downtown LA that host a number of different companies, law firms, and other offices. They were completed in 2070, although they had to be renovated in 2071 when the two penthouse floors got severely damaged in a full-blown assault by Aztechnology mercenary forces on the Ghost Council of the drug cartels that was taking place in the towers.

In conformance with the zoning regulations for downtown LA, to all outer appearances the three tapering towers are swathed in Data Age Art Deco, a deconstruction and revisualization of the Golden Age of Hollywood as it would have been with modern building materials and pervasive AR. At the pinnacle of these monuments, sunburst crowns and halos of dazzling, mirror-finished chrome hide the bridges linking the top floors of each of the three towers, forming a single continuous level.

The party will take place at the renovated office penthouses that sit atop exclusive corporate buildings in Los Angeles. The buildings are linked by covered sky bridges, and each penthouse has a three-meter balcony around the perimeter.

All interior walls, currently hung with drapes, decorations, and AREs that give the penthouse a burlesque-club look, are average materials (Armor Rating 6, Structure Rating 4). The doors leading to the suites, main conference room, and stairs are reinforced fire doors (Armor Rating 12, Structure Rating 8). The external scenic windows offering a breathtaking view of the city in every direction are double-depth ballistic glass (Armor Rating 14, Structure Rating 10). All exterior walls and doors are wi-fi proofed (Wireless Negation 4), though communication via the building's own servers is possible.

Guests will be welcomed by some of the pornstars of Magic Mind at the reception desk, which has been turned into a bar, served by three barkeepers who mix drinks and hand out champagne. All guests have to enter through here and will be asked to leave all commlinks and recording devices behind. The conference rooms of each penthouse have been retrofitted for the party. The first conference room is now a stage/dance floor, where burlesque entertainment and strip shows are performed by actresses accompanied by music played by a DJ, who will later play music for dancing. The second conference room has been turned into a dining room, where a buffet is served by a caterer and their staff, and the third one is now a trideo cinema that plays Magic Mind's favorite porn sims.

In addition, two office suites have been transformed into massage parlors where the guests can get erotic massages from their favorite stars or professional

trained prostitutes, and the three penthouses have plenty of offices outfitted for private matters. Altogether, forty guests will attend the party.

Each penthouse is served by two express elevators (although the ones of tower one and two have been shut down), an emergency stairwell, and four two-person emergency pods. These are two-man capsules that shoot down to the ground floor (twenty-four floors down) in seven seconds using pneumatic chutes, cushioned by shock-absorbing anti-flame foam.

The security system and cameras of the three penthouses are isolated from the Towers' security network and have been physically dismantled to leave no incriminating evidence.

PEOPLE

REGENCY MEGAMEDIA CORPORATE SECURITY

Security during the party in the Baltimore Towers is run by Regency's Ghatak Commandos, a special operations unit named after the Hindi word meaning "killer" or "lethal." While Ghatak commandos are usually shock troops not unlike the Red Samurai, they have been drafted into this bodyguard job due to the presence of Shirdi Bedi, the CEO's son, who is attending the party. In addition, arcane security is carried out by a corporate Brahmin Hindu mage.

BRAHMIN MAGE

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

HUMAN MALE

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
3	3	3	3	6	5	4	4	2	6	6

Initiative	7 + 1D6
Condition Monitor	11
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 7, Social 7
Armor	8
Skills	Assensing 6, Con 5, Conjuring skill group 5, Counterspelling 5, Etiquette 5 (Media +2), Perception 6, Pistols 4 (Tasers +2), Spellcasting 7, Unarmed Combat 5 (Touch-only Attacks +2)
Knowledge Skills	Bollywood 8, Corporate Magic 5, Hinduism 8, Media Business 6, Mumbai Underworld 4
Languages	Marathi N, English 5
Spells	Analyze Truth, Armor, Bugs, Clairvoyance, Decrease Reflexes, Increase Reflexes, Heal, Mass Agony, Turn Blood to Ichor
Gear	Actioneer Business Suit, commlink (Device Rating 4) Counterspelling focus (Force 3), Sustaining focus (Force 4)
Weapons	Tiffani Defiance Protector [Taser, Acc 5 (6), DV 7S(e), AP –5, SA, 3(m) w/ laser sight, concealable holster]

GHATAK COMMANDOS

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 5)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS
6 (9)	4	4 (6)	4 (6)	3	3	3	2	1	0.35

Initiative	7(9) + 1(3)D6
Condition Monitor	15
Limits	Physical 6 (9), Mental 4, Social 3 (5)
Armor	8 (15)
Skills	Athletics skill group 5, Automatics 6, Close Combat skill group 8, Etiquette 4 (Corporate +2), Gunnery 4, Heavy Weapons 4, Intimidation 5 (Physical +2), Outdoors skill group 4, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 4, Pistols 5
Knowledge Skills	Corporate Forces 6, Indian Military 8, Law Enforcement 5, Small Unit Tactics 5 (Shadowrunners +2), Weapon Brands 4
Languages	Hindi N, English 5
Qualities	Tough as Nails 2 (Stun)
Augmentations	Bone lacing (titanium, Alphaware), dermal plating (Rating 4, Alphaware), internal air tank (Rating 2), smartlink, wired reflexes (Rating 2, Alphaware)
Gear	Armanté Suit [w/ Nonconductivity Rating 4; +1 Social Tests when wireless], commlink (Device Rating 4), contacts [Rating 1, w/ image link]
Weapons	Fist [Unarmed, Acc X, Reach —, DV 9P, AP —] Kris [Blades, Acc 6, Reach —, DV 8P, AP –1] Onotari Arms Violator [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5 (7), DV 7P, AP –1, SA, RC 1, 10(c), w/ smartlink, concealable holster]

SURVIVAL INSTINCT

POSTED BY: MR. BONDS

The recent announcement of the Megacorporate Revision of all AA corporations was a bomb dropped in the corporate world. Or perhaps it was more like an earthquake, whose aftershocks keep following the initial blow. While some few corporations started instantly engaging in talks for further cooperation or even mergers, most corporations responded in the way the Mount A-lympus intended: by going at each other's throat.

While the Corporate Court did not officially hand out a carte blanche for hostile takeover endeavors or sanction corporate warmongering, this was—in truth—the whole point of the announcement as elaborated earlier. With the AA-league caught in dog fights among themselves, the Triple As don't have to worry about them for the time being and can re-focus in their internal problems (or cleaning up the CFD/Boston mess). And in addition, the infighting may leave one of the AA animals wounded so that they can take over the prey themselves. Win-win.

> It is rumored up here that the proposal for the Revision actually came from Wuxing judge Li Feng but was instantly picked up by S-K, Ares, Aztechnology, NeoNET, and Evo, while all the Japanese megas apparently were the only ones to stand united with a vote against the Revision.
> Orbital DK

> They are the ones that have most to lose, especially if their geographically limited backyard (and island with limited megasprawls) is ignited by corporate wars involving Japanese AAs, of which there are a couple.
> Rigger X

What we are currently observing is the first wave of corporate skirmishes that are occurring all over the globe. Especially the smaller AA corporations, which really need to worry about degradation and loss of their extrarerritoriality, have been backed into a corner and will be fighting tooth and nails to prevent the inevitable.

> This will be very interesting for some companies on the Manhattan Development Consortium. Citigroup is still a smaller AA compared to S-K and Wuxing corporate banks, the Frankfurt Bank Association, or HKB. While Prometheus Engineering built some of the most prestigious buildings of the world, it is still dependent on megacorporate contracts and often competes with S-K, Proteus, and Ares with regards to construction and engineering outside the Americas. As it holds most of the lucrative material patents, I could easily see them become a target for a takeover attempt—or make one themselves (possibly on a long-term partner such as the Genesis Consortium) to secure its position. Similar cases could be made for Trans Orbital, Winter Systems, and NYPD, Inc., which are very specialized AAs.
> Cosmo

> The future of Winter Systems or NYPD, Inc. might depend on Lone Star's next moves. Since losing the contract for Seattle and coming under fire from Knight Errant operations, their business has been shrinking constantly, also due to increasing global competition from FBA-backed Sternschutz, Yakashima's Sakura Security, MCTs Parashield, Petrovski Security, and Ertxanta Police subsidiaries and former Esprit-owned Centurion, which was recently taken over by Saeder-Krupp as part of the Esprit/Dassault deal. While NYPD, Inc. is holding security contracts in a couple of sprawls outside North America, most of their influence is limited to New York and the MDC. The same goes for Winter Systems, except that they have additional revenues from drone and weapons research and manufacturing. If it is true that CEO Hampton is gearing up Lone Star to gobble up some new assets, either of them seem to be possible targets, especially if members of the MDC get caught up in their own struggles for survival.
> Hard Exit

One candidate for losing AA supremacy might be Telestrian Industries Corporation. While quite entrenched in Tír Tairngire, especially now with Marie-Louise Telestrian as High Prince of the *Ele Arandur*, most business analysts are quite confident TIC will likely not meet the new criteria for AA qualification (although it is kind of blurry how they got the status in the first place anyway, with Tír Tairngire never signing the BRA). Since the announce-

ment, activities in the Telestrian Habitat in Cara'Sir have multiplied exponentially. Interestingly, most of Telestrian's operations are actually not geared toward the "land of promise" itself but are targeted at Tír na nÓg, the German Duchy of Pomorya, the Elven Zulu Nation and—partially—the NAN and Seattle.

> That is actually not that surprising. If Lynne Telestrian—Marie-Louise's niece and successor as CEO—needs to take over assets fast, it would be political suicide to attempt this within Tír Tairngire, where the only valuable local targets are the New Dawn Corporation (in bed with IOND), Williamette Compustat Corporation (rumored to be under the protection of GOD because they inlicensed proprietary software when building the new grid) and the Demarco-owned Andalusian Light Industries (archenemies of the Telestrian family) as well as Horizon-owned assets (too big for Telestrian to go after).
> Tarislar

In addition to the targeted businesses in Seattle or the NAN, including A corporations in the Sioux Nation such as Mesametric, High Plains Coding, or Eta Engineering, Telestrian is apparently focusing on what they know best: dealings in elven sovereign states. From what sources in Europe and Africa are telling, Lynne Telestrian sent envoys into the states to negotiate acquisitions or investments with local corporations like Armaments Éireann-Tír, Sculptured Environmental Systems Inc., O'Toole Transcom, the Pomoryan house-corporations, and the Zulu Insintu Conglomerate. However, the "offer" to join the Telestrian Corporation was not very well received, to say the least.

> They were quite irritated by the request. National corporations in Pomorya and TNO are owned by the noble families (the Danaan families and the Duchy's houses) or Zulu tribal council (or Heavenherds, whatever you want to believe), and they saw no reason or need to sell. In addition, as TNO never signed the Business Recognition Accords and corporations are only allowed to operate within the country as a joint venture that is majorly owned by the state (Gaeatronics, Renraku, and Ares have operated like this in the Tír for decades). The whole takeover would only work if TNO would give up their reclusive, business-hostile attitude like Pomorya recently did after constant pressure from Saeder-Krupp and AG Chemie.
> Frosty

It can be assumed that the meetings were just a smokescreen for something bigger to come. From what the Emerald Isle's shadows are telling, people in the envoy's entourage with ties to the Moonlight Thorns, Mistish Farad and Meraerth ke'Tolo met with people affiliated with the terrorist group known as the Unseelie Court, who are striving to bring down the current elven supremacist government (the Seelie Court). Not sure if Lynne Telestrian just wants to put pressure on the corporations to come into the Telestrian fold by supporting the terrorists or whether she wants to bring about the collapse of the whole system by lighting fire to that powder keg, even if it means pitting the Council of Princes against the Seelie Court. In any case, I see plenty of job opportunities in the elven nations within the next few months.

> Still kind of a lengthy maneuver. If the country gets caught up in a civil "war of flowers" of metahumans and fairies, the conflict could take years to resolve, which would be too late for Telestrian.
> Cosmo

> Not if the Corporate Court or one megacorporation—say Horizon—put them up for it in order to get TNO to sign the BRA on the long run. Since Switzerland and Pomoyra buckled post-Crash 2.0 due to S-K machinations, TNO is one of the few remaining opposition orgs that has not fallen. And the only one who can really bring down aTír is aTír (from the outside or within). Maybe Telestrian made a deal with the megas to get off the hook?
> Tarislar

Apart from those corps struggling for their status and their privileges (and possibly survival), there are those AA corporations who aren't in real danger but are seizing the opportunity to attempt takeover for their own growth. Or settle old scores, like Spinrad Industries tak-

ing on Sol Media with support from German media outfit DeMeKo. As Sol Media was responsible for publicizing the Marseille scandal in 2051 that cost Spinrad his AA status more than two decades ago (a status he recently regained in 2074), Johnny Spinrad is moving heaven and earth to return the favor to Sol Media and CEO Marina Nidos by forcing them down to A level.

> Actually Spln's interest in Sol Media from a business perspective is low. While Sol's tourism assets would complement Spln's portofolio, Johnny is just a vindictive son of a bitch out for revenge on the corporations and the people that have crossed him in the past.
> Traveler Jones

Johnny persuaded the DeMeKo, who is Sol's major rival in Europe (next to Ares Entertainment, MCT Media and some Horizon assets) to join the cause. As the DeMeKo has been bordering AA status due to its vast media assets in Northern and Eastern Europe, the takeover of certain Sol parts could pave the way for them for AA status.

> Spinrad promised the DeMeKo to throw in his weight in the UK for the DeMeKo to acquire our media assets—such as the BBC, which, like many Britcorps, remained independent so far due to the support of the Lord Protector's Office and other secretive investors. However, now with the LPO gone and the political landscape in shambles, they could come up for the grabs soon. First come, first serve.
> Chainmaker

> While revenge is fun and gratifying and all, the Sol maneuver is only part of a larger game Spinrad is playing. It's about positioning, and he wants to be in position for something big.
> Cosmo

Last but not least there are governments (didn't seem that coming, did you?).

A number of governments are not really all that unhappy about the Megacorporate Revision, even though they would never declare that in public. While politicians may be worried about the collateral damage (damages, crime waves, job losses) that corporate infighting might do to their countries, AA corporations have a reputation of being troublemakers on their own due to their special privileges (territorial rights, self-government, taxation, citizenship) and their often trigger-happy armed forces. Those powers have caused the local governments more than just headaches in the past, and corporate meddling in a national politics and elections has further alienated the governments. A reduction in the of AA corporations would provide many governments with stronger positions toward the pan-corporate body (or at least they think), which is why I expect that the CAS, UCAS, the Allied German States, France, Russia, Amazonia, and the Arabian Caliphate will meddle in corporate affairs to further their own agendas.

> Especially because they have the right to grant exterritorial rights in the country (and just there) even if a corporation does not qualify for AA status with the Corporate Court, which gives them a bargaining chip in the future for those corps that get degraded in the process. That is a key part of the BRA. The BRA force the governments to give exterritorial right to corporations and respect them when they have been vetted by the CC, whether the governments like it or not.
> Cosmo

BACKGROUND

In the 2040s Spinrad Industries was a rising star in the corporate world. Entrenched in Europe's high society and jet set, Spln's businesses like sport and lifestyle cybernetics, luxury goods, fashion, entertainment management, marketing, tourism, and even magic flourished. Flamboyant CEO-playboy and majority owner Johnny Spinrad, however, wanted more than "just" AA status. Destined (in his view) to build a megacorporate AAA empire to join ranks with the Big Eight, he aggressively moved forward, forming a corporate consortium in 2051 to negotiate a deal with the French government for the reconstruction and development of the earthquake-battered Monaco (now named New Monaco).

In the same year, however, the rising star suddenly burned up and began to sink rapidly, when Spln got caught in the Marseille Scandal, accused of illegal human experimentation. Exposed by Sol Media Group's top investigative reporter Madeleine Muller, who had a bulletproof reputation following her revelation of toxic waste dumping in the Italian Confederation and post-EuroWar journalism on war crimes and radioactive poisoning in Eastern Europe, the evidence could not be ignored, and the Corporate Court had to investigate. Ultimately, the Court (under a S-K Chief Judge) found Spinrad Industries guilty, not only fining Spln with a two-billion-nuyen forfeit but also degrading the corporation back to A-level status.

Sol Media Group, a Spanish-based media conglomerate that originally broadcasted the story that led to the scandal, did not stop there. Sol Media's assets (trideo, e-magazine, and newsfeeds) released a shitstorm on Johnny Spinrad, both on his corporation and himself about amoral corporate greed, lack of business values, and mismanagement of the Spln empire from the top down that damaged Spln's reputation even further. Within a few weeks Johnny went from corporate prodigy to pariah, and he had to make long-term sacrifices to keep the rest of his company from becoming bankrupt or the target of a hostile takeover. While Spinrad rose again like phoenix from the ashes more than ten years

later and recently managed to reacquire his AA status (against all odds), he still has not forgiven those who he believe wronged him back then. While most of his desire for revenge is still targeted at Lofwyr and Saeder-Krupp, who he believes initiated the scandal in the first place as payback for excluding him on the New Monaco project and meddling in *Dragonville* (Marseille), Spinrad still holds both Sol Media and Madeleine Muller responsible for playing their part. With his own recent ascension back to AA and the announced Megacorporate Revision, Spinrad sees an opportunity to pay Sol Media and CEO Marina Nidos back in kind, joining forces with German media conglomerate DeMeKo to bring Sol down to an A-level corporation.

Sol Media is, however, not an easy target. Headquartered in Barcelona, Sol is one of the Eurocorps that achieved the greatest growth in the past decades, mainly due to its strong presence and expansion in Latin America that was possible due to an alliance with Aztechnology, which has supported Nidos media and tourism ventures across LatAm including Aztlan since the '50s. More importantly—though that is not public knowledge—Sol has deep connections to the *Asociacón Vásquez*, the Spanish organized crime syndicate, which is part of the Alta Comissione. The Vásquez syndicate has been backing and bankrolling Sol Media over the last decades, and syndicate head Don Vásquez has obtained substantial interest in Sol.

Spinrad knows that the only way to take down Sol Media on the long run is to sever Sol's connections to its biggest supporters, Aztechnology and Vásquez. To deal with the latter, Spinrad Industries' new spymaster Rolf Bremen, a former MET2000 strategist and head of S-K Prime who had a falling-out with the dragon in the late '60s, will hire the player characters and bring them to Lisbon to brief them on the mission. Instead of going toe-to-toe with an underworld syndicate that might cause more trouble than it is worth, Spinrad Industries wants to negotiate a more lucrative deal with the leadership of the Vásquez clan, thereby separating them from Sol.

While aging Don Vásquez still acts as the Mafia's patriarch, daily operations are run by his daughter Maria,

who is struggling to keep the organization from falling apart and is determined to bring it back to its old glory. Though still the dominant syndicate across the Iberian Peninsula and along the French Riviera up to Monaco, the Asociacón has suffered from competition by the Arabic Al-Akhirah Aswad Mayia in Andalucia with ties to AA corporation Meridional Agronomics. The Aztlan-Amazonian War and ties of Vásquez to Sol Media, who have has connections to Aztechnology, instigated another conflict between the Asociacón and its subordinates, the Portuguese Baptista familia, who have historical ties to Amazonian syndicates and the Luso-African Kussundulola Ghost Cartel. In the last two years, the conflict has turned into an internal mob war across the Iberian Peninsula that even fratellanza were not able to pacify anymore. Last but not least the Vásquez syndicate overextended itself to monopolize the Iberian market for illegal medical services and augmentations (shadow and black clinics) and is even rumored to have set up a clinic with a program to churn out cyborgs to defend his operations.

As the Asociacón could use these cyborgs now more than ever locked in their underworld war, Spinrad wants to offer the Vásquez clan SpIn's support of the program through the resources and experience of his augmentations branch (like the Spin Shops) in exchange for Vásquez withdrawing their support of Sol Media. However, so far any attempts for a personal meeting between Spinrad envoys and the syndicate have been brushed off by Vásquez as his honor forbids him to deal with Spinrad. The runners are therefore sent to Barcelona to coerce the syndicate into a meeting with Bremen as Spinrad's mediator.

They will to have abduct Pilar Carrillo, a renowned forger also known as Mosaic, who is crucial to the syndicate's art-forgery and black-market operations, from her forger shop in the Gothic Quarter in Barcelona without burning bridges that may hamper the negotiations (due to the syndicates strong code of honor). While Bremen will engage in setting up the meeting after the job is done, the runners will have to babysit Carrillo, only to be ambushed by Europol agents who see an opportunity to get hold of the forger without requiring an arrest warrant as they are technically rescuing a kidnaped victim. After extinguishing the ambitions of the European police task force, they will meet up with Bremen again to run the security of the summit between Spinrad Industries and Asociacón Vásquez. To drive the wedge deeper between Sol Media and Vásquez, however, Bremen has given the location of the meeting to the DeMeKo, who leaked it to Sol Media, sending their own forces to the party to sabotage the negotiations, bringing Vásquez even closer to Spinrad.

PLOT POINT 1

NIGHTFLIGHT TO LISBON

The runners are contacted by their fixers to fly to Lisbon to meet with a SpIn Johnson within the next two days. He will brief them about the details of their job, which will be—in a nutshell—a combined extraction-bodyguard job in the European underworld. Mr. Johnson will pay all the expenses for transportation (within reason) such as transatlantic flights, but the runners have to arrange the means of the transportation on their own, which will depend on how much gear they are able to bring in for the mission on their own.

In Lisbon, the runners are supposed to meet with the Johnson in the *Mercado*, the "The Meat Market" residing in walking distance of the big ferry and rail terminal of Cais do Sodré in the Old Baixa red-light district. When the runners arrive at night, the district will be already alive by the exuberant nightlife—flashing neon African and Amazonian motifs and Arabic graffiti, joygirls and boys looking for company, as well as mercs from different outfits out for a good time. The Mercado itself is a former old market now transformed to an open-air nightclub and pit-fight venue, favored by mercs, runners, and executives looking for a chaotic place to hide the business they want to conduct.

In the club, their SpIn Johnson turns out to be former Lofwyr's right-claw man Rolf Bremen (late forties, heavily augmented, looks and acts more like a merc than a Johnson with his military attitude), who now works for Spinrad as spymaster and serves as the runner's handler for the mission.

The job is to abduct the renowned forger Mosaic of the Asociacón Vásquez to get the syndicate's attention for a business proposition that Spinrad wants to make to the Vásquez leadership. The plan is for the runners to keep her safe after the abduction until a meeting has been officially arranged, which Bremen anticipates will take a week.

Since the Vásquez syndicate has a strong sense of honor in their dealings, the runners are urged not to use lethal force of any kind against any syndicate members during the extraction, even if fired upon, so as not to sabotage the subsequent negotiations due to use of excessive force. Everything else (such as the method of extraction and a safehouse) is left to their own planning although Bremen will provide them with the name of a local freelance fixer in Barcelona called *Caballero* that they can contact for assistance of gear. For their services, Bremen is willing to offer 8,000 nuyen per runner for the abduction and the week of safekeeping, but player characters may negotiate terms as usual (though Bremen is not willing to go higher than 1.5 times the offered price).

Transport to Barcelona has been arranged per boat owned by a smuggling crew of Corsican pirates that will bring the runners and their gear into the city. As the ship has some storage space in smuggling compartments,

the runners may use the opportunity to shop for weapons, armor, or any other goods they had to leave at home, for which the black and grey markets of a mercenary haven such as Lisbon offer plenty of opportunities.

PLOT POINT 2

THE FORGER'S DEN

Upon arrival in Barcelona, the runners need to accustom themselves to the new surroundings if they have never been to Catalonian capital before.

Barcelona in the 2070s is the still the richest city in the country. Full of clean and neat historical monuments, chic restaurants, Spanish fashion boutiques, and nova-hot clubs that attract tourists, the city hosts a prospering Spanish jet set that rivals Nice and New Monaco due to Sol Media's media and tourism influence, due to the presence of their headquarters in the city. Though the Sol arcology known as "The Sun Tower" is the most dominant emblem of the city, true economic power resides with the Aztechnology Europe division, which is the nerve center for all of the megacorporation's operations across Europe, along with ESUS, which controls the Barcelona transport hub (sea, flight and rail lines). Still, the chasm between the have and the have-not runs deep within the city, and it is exploited by the Vásquez syndicate, who are using cheap labor to counterfeit designer clothing while also sending out pickpockets and thugs to prey on tourists. On the other end of the spectrum, Barcelona is the biggest art black market in Europe with the syndicate's dealers being involved in art theft or forgeries sold to a wealthy clientele in which the runner's target, Mosaic, is a key player.

The runners meet Caballero, a charming human male face in his mid-forties who acts as fixer between corporations, high society, the shadows, and the underworld. The meet can happen anywhere in the city where there is active social life (like a *pintxo* bar), and Caballero can help the runners set up a safehouse in Barcelona or help them acquiring gear (such as a Catalan or Spanish lin-

guasoft) by making the necessary connections, if they are willing to pay his price. While a professional, he is a typical Spaniard—unhurried, energetic (with a lot of gestures and close personal contact), and an attitude toward time that is quite flexible.

The workshop of Mosaic is located in an urban estate in the Barri Gothic (the gothic quarter), a confounding maze of narrow medieval streets dating back to Roman times. The house is protected day and night by *matón*, augmented thugs sworn to the syndicate, and an ork *maego* running arcane security (the estate is patrolled by a Force 5 Spirit of Air). Mosaic rarely leaves the mansion, focusing on her paintings, sculptures, forgeries, and other inventions in her different studios (the household has a fixed staff that takes care of all amenities). The only occasion she leaves the building regularly is to attend church on Sundays or if she has to perform a consultation to determine the validity of an objet d'art in person (which could be used as a ploy to lure her out, if the runners can pull it off). In any case she will leave with a security detail consisting of four Mafia *soldados* and the mage.

If the runners should be spotted infiltrating the mansion or directly assaulting the estate, Carrillo will try to make it to a secret reinforced and warded panic room hidden inside one of her workshops and wait for backup from the syndicate, which she can call from the inside by non-wireless means.

PLOT POINT 3

EUROPOL INTERVENTION

When the runners abduct Mosaic, they will raise the interest of a Europol team that has been sitting on the estate for months to get hold of the forger to force her to turn on the syndicate. In their efforts, they might have gotten the runners on tape casing the house. The Europol officers have not been able to collect enough evidence to get an official arrest warrant, so their hands are tied. When the runners now make their move, they will give the Europol agents the judicial space to react to an ongoing crime, the abduction of a Spanish citizen. As the metroxplex police provider, a local branch of Knight Errant, is ridden with corrupt officers answering to the Asociacón Vásquez (Barcelona is the core stronghold of the syndicate), they will not request any further assistance from local law enforcement and try to take the runners down on their own to free Mosaic.

If the Europol team has time to react (for example, if the runners chose to assault the house while the team is running surveillance), they will try to tail the runners to their safehouse (by following them astrally, physically or tagging their getaway car) and then prepare for a direct assault to arrest the forger. If the runners, stay mobile they will eventually try to intercept them.

If the Europol agents were too surprised to react to the runners directly (e.g., if they chose to extract Carrillo outside her workshop), they will try to use their local resources to track the runners down. Driven to not let months of investigation be in vain, they will use any means necessary to find information on the whereabouts of the runners. To that end, they will turn the screws of any shadow source the runners may have interacted with (like Caballero).

If the runners have covered their tracks well enough that the Europol officers are not able to track them down, the Europol team, having received a tip of the planned summit between Vásquez and SpIn, could also intercept the runners while there are on their way to the marina.

PLOT POINT 4

THE SUMMIT

As soon as Bremen has negotiated the meet, he calls the runners to bring Mosaic to the Barcelona Marina Port Vell, where they will be picked up. The meeting will take place on a ninety-meter super-yacht, the *High Roller*, owned by Johnny Spinrad, which has been brought in from New Monaco, where it is usually anchored. The runners will be required to run security on the ship while the eight crew members will prepare for the arrivals of the guests and steer the boat off-coast to meet with a speedboat that will bring the Vásquez envoys onboard. Patriarch Don Vásquez himself, an old man in his seventies or eighties who has replaced some limbs with cutting-edge cybernetics but is still struggling with his non-rejuvenated age (now even more with the ever-present fear of CFD) and too proud to take any help, leads the delegation. The more the runners caused problems (i.e., deaths, destruction, or other collateral damage) while apprehending Mosaic, the tenser the meeting will be, especially with the armed and mostly augmented bodyguards (use the following archetypes from *SR5* and *Run Faster*: Brawling Adept, Disgraced Bodyguard, Sprawl Ganger, Street Samurai, or Tank,) protecting the *patrón*.

During the meeting, where Bremen will lay out the strategy of the partnership, the meeting will be ambushed by a Sol Media strike team known as Eclipse. They will approach the yacht under water in a Proteus Lamprey (a sea sled) that was retrofitted to allow transport for six scuba-equipped passengers who will emerge from the sea in diving gear and with the aid of three bound Force 5 Water Spirits (three services each, in the shape of waves and a kraken) who will try to throw the opposition into the sea to terminate the threat (or use their engulf power afterward). For Underwater Combat, see p. 156, *Run & Gun*. While the bodyguards and the runners are technically on the same side, the bodyguards may view the runners as collateral damage when firing on the enemy.

PEOPLE

ASOCIACÓN VÁSQUEZ

PILAR CARRILLO, A.K.A. MOSAIC

Pilar is one of the most-skilled but least-known forgers of Europe; some consider her to be a true artist. Born as a street kid in the streets of Toledo, she spent her early days as a pickpocket before moving up the criminal food chain as a con artist and forger in Madrid. Due to her wits, knack for technology, and her talent for art and improvisation (thanks to her adept powers), she got the attention of a French forger in the Milieu who taught her the art of forging antiques and works of fine arts such as painting and sculptures, which she advanced by combining traditional techniques with modern material science. After traveling for more than fifteen years to refine her skills and knowledge in different arts and making herself a name as a forger (called Mosaic) while working together with art thieves or shadowrunners to hit different museums and private collectors, she became entangled with the Vásquez syndicate during one mission in Barcelona. While the syndicate did not give her much choice in the beginning after she tried to screw them, she has come to enjoy the Asociacón's vast resources, which allowed her to venture into new areas and develop new technologies. Since Maria Vásquez has been taking over from her father, Mosaic has become even more involved in the art black market dealings of the syndicate

FEMALE DWARF

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
6	6	3	4	5	4	5	5	7	3	6.0

Initiative	8 + 1D6
Condition Monitor	11 / 11
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 6, Social 7
Armor	0
Skills	Athletics skill group 3, Artisan 6(8), Assensing 4 (Aura +2), Con 5, Chemistry 5, Etiquette 5 (Underworld +2), Forgery 8(10), Negotiation 5, Palming 5 (6), Perception 6 (8), Pistols 3 (Taser +2), Sneaking 4 (Urban +2)
Knowledge Skills	Art 8, Art Black Market 8, Asociacón Vasquez 5, Cutting-Edge Technology 6, Forgery Techniques 8, Material Sciences 7, Painting 6, Sculpting 6
Languages	Catalan 8, English 5, Japanese 3, Mandarin 2, Spanish N
Initiate Grade	1
Metamagic	Centering
Powers	Astral Perception [1], Danger Sense 3 [0.75], Demara [0.5], Eidetic Sense Memory [0.5], Enhanced Perception 2 [0.75]*, Improved Ability (Forgery) 2 [1], Improved Ability (Artisan) 2 [1.0], Improved Senses (Tactile, Human Scale) [0.5], Nimble Fingers [0.25], Three-dimensional memory [0.25]*, Wall Running [0.5] ** Adept power cost reduced by Artisan's Way quality*
Qualities	Adept, Artisan's Way
Gear	Electrochromic or feedback clothing, fake ID (Rating 6), commlink (Device Rating 5), AR gloves, rosary (qi focus, Rating 4, Iron Will 2)

VASQUEZ SYNDICATE MATÓN / MATÓNA

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 3)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS
5 (6)	3 (4)	3 (5)	6 (7)	2	4	2	1	2	3.6

Initiative	5 (7) + 1D6
Condition Monitor	11
Limits	Physical 7 (9), Mental 4, Social 4
Armor	10
Skills	Athletics skill group 3, Automatics 3 (Submachine Guns +2), Etiquette 1 (Underworld +2), Perception 2, Unarmed Combat 4 (Spur +2)
Augmentations	Cyberspur (retractable), muscle replacement 1, plastic bone lacing, reaction enhancers 2
Gear	AR gloves, armor vest, commlink (Device Rating 3), contacts or shades [Rating 1, w/ image link]
Weapons	Spur [Physical, Reach —, DV 10P, AP –3] Krime Spree [Submachine Gun, Acc 4, DV 7P, AP —, FA, RC 1, 30 (c)]

VASQUEZ SYNDICATE MEIGO

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 3)

MALE ORK

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
7	3	4	7	5	5	3	3	5	6.0	1

Initiative	7 + 1D6
Condition Monitor	12
Limits	Physical 9, Mental 6, Social 6
Armor	9
Qualities	Magician, Mentor Spirit (Thunderbird)*
Skills	Assensing 4 (Astral Signatures +2), Blades 4, Conjuring 5 (Spirits of Air +2), Etiquette (Crime), Intimidation 4 (6)* (Physical +2), Perception 3, Spellcasting 5, Throwing Weapons 4, Unarmed Combat 2 ** A Thunderbird magician must succeed in a Charisma + Willpower (3) Test to avoid responding to an insult in kind.*
Spells	Detect Enemies, Double Image, Electricity Aura, Increase Strength, Chain Lighting
Gear	AR gloves, armor vest, commlink (Device Rating 3), contacts [Rating 1, w/ image link]
Weapons	Urban Tribe Tomahawk [Acc Physical +1, Reach —, DV 10P, AP –1] Krime Spree [Submachine Gun, Acc 4, DV 9P, AP —, FA, RC 1, 30 (c)]

EUROPOL

Funded and maintained by the NEEC, EuroPol is a semi-autonomous police organization with several special task forces for anti-terrorism, organized crime, arms, BTL, controlled substances & drugs, and Matrix crime, among other areas. While EuroPol has a quasi-federal jurisdiction and does not have to answer to local or corporate hierarchies, they prefer to function by working with the local authorities on investigations in tandem with local and corporate law enforcement when possible rather than acting as an independent body.

The local task force consists of four agents and is led by a Spanish mage by the name of Esteban Martinez-Osorio. It will not liaise with local law enforcement due to the widespread corruption in the area.

EUROPOL AGENT

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS
4	5(7)	3(4)	4	4	5	3	4	2	4.9

Initiative	6 (7) + 2D6
Condition Monitor	10
Limits	Physical 5 (6), Mental 6, Social 6
Armor	9 or 15
Skills	Athletics skill group 4, Automatics or Exotic Weapons (Sonic Rifle) 5, Clubs 5 (Batons +2), Computer 5 (Matrix Search +2), Etiquette 5 (Law Enforcement or Underworld +2), First Aid 3, Intimidation 4 (Interrogation +2), Negotiation 3, Perception 5 (Searching +2), Pilot Ground Craft 3 (Wheeled +2), Pistols 5, Unarmed Combat 5
Augmentations	Cybereyes [Rating 3 w/ flare compensation, image link, low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision, vision enhancement 2, vision magnification], enhanced articulation, muscle toner 2, olfactory booster 3, synaptic booster 1, taste booster 3
Gear	Armor vest (unprepared) or light security armor (prepared), commlink (DR4), earbuds [Capacity 3, w/ audio enhancement 3], grenade cam [thermographic], paint grenade, pneumatic ram (1 per team), 2 gas grenades [Pepper Punch], 1 flash-pak, subvocal microphone, AR glove, security, sensor and stealth tags as appropriate
Weapons	Stun baton [Club, Acc 4, Reach 1, DV 9Se, AP –5] Colt Government 2066 [Heavy Pistol, Acc 6, DV7P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 14 (c), w/ smartgun system] HK-227 [Submachine Gun, Acc 5 (7), DV 7P, AP —, SA/BF/FA, RC 1, 28(c), w/ smartgun system] Ares Screech Sonic Rifle [Sonic Rifle, Acc 6, DV 7S, SS, 10 (c), target hit suffers from disorientation and nausea; resisted with Willpower, no Armor; follows shotgun rules to determine spread]—1 per team

EUROPOL MAGE

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

MALE ELF

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
4	4	4	3	4	4	4	5	6	4	6.0

Initiative	8 + 1D6
Condition Monitor	10 / 11
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 8, Social 8
Armor	9 or 15
Skills	Assensing 4, Astral Combat 3, Athletics skill group 2, Computer 4, Conjuring skill group 4, Counterspelling 4, Etiquette 5 (Underworld +2), Leadership 4, Perception 4 (Searching +2), Pistols 4, Spellcasting 5, Unarmed Combat 3 (Block +2)
Qualities	Magician
Spells	Demolish Weapons, Detect Individual, Hush, Interference, Increase Body, Increase Reflexes, Magebolt, Physical Barrier, Recorded Room, Stabilize, Stunball
Gear	AR glove, armor vest (unprepared) or light security armor (prepared), commlink (Device Rating 3), earbuds [Capacity 3, w/ audio enhancement 3], grenade cam [thermographic], paint grenade, pneumatic ram (1 per team), 2 gas grenades [Pepper Punch], 1 flash-pak, Sustaining focus (Health) 4, subvocal microphone, security, sensor and stealth tags as appropriate
Weapons	Colt Government 2066 [Heavy Pistol, Acc 6, DV 7P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 14 (c), w/ smartgun system]

BMW INFINITY X (SUV)

A lighter military SUV than the classical Ares Humvee, the BMW Infinity X that has grown popular among Europe's military, mercenary and law enforcement outfits since its introduction in 2075.

BMW INFINITY X

HAND	SPEED	ACCEL	BOD	ARM	PILOT	SENS	SEATS
5/5	4	2	14	13	2	4	6

SOL MEDIA ECLIPSE

The Eclipse is Sol Media's elite strike force. Usually tasked with defending the corporate headquarters in Barcelona, they are also sent out on occasion as troubleshooters to enforce the AA corporation's interests.

The Eclipse team that will make an assault on Spinrad's yacht is trained in on- and under-water operations and includes four combat divers and two support mages.

The team runs a The PI-Tac Level II Novatech Tactician on their integrated commlink system (p. 105, *Run & Gun*) with one NPC acting as designated team leader.

ECLIPSE SPECIAL OPS

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 5)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS
4 (5)	5 (8)	6 (8)	5 (7)	4	4	3	3	3	0.6

Initiative	11 + 2D6
Condition Monitor	10
Limits	Physical 7 (9), Mental 5, Social 4
Armor	8
Skills	Athletics skill group 6, Blades 7, Automatics 7, Diving 4 (Military +2), Etiquette 3 (Corporate +2), Leadership 4, Sneaking 6, Throwing Weapons 5 (Grenades +2), Perception 4, Unarmed Combat 6 (Subduing +2)
Augmentations	Commlink (Device Rating 6), cybereyes [Rating 3 w/ flare compensation, image link, low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision, vision enhancement 2, vision magnification], muscle replacement 2, skin pocket, suprathyroid gland, ultrasound sensor, wired reflexes 1
Gear	Armored wet suit [like form-fitting w/ pulse weave], diving gear, earbuds [w/ audio enhancement 2, selective sound filter 1], AR gloves, grenades [3 flash-bangs, 2 thermal smoke]
Weapons	PPSK-4 [Machine Pistol, Acc 5 (6), DV 7P, AP –1, SA/BF, RC 1, 30(c), w/ smartgun system, explosive ammunition or Stick-n-Shock, DV 5S(e) AP –5] Survival knife [Acc 5, Reach —, DV 9P, AP –1]

ECLIPSE SPECIAL OPS MAGE

(PROFESSIONAL RATING 5)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
4	3	5 (6)	4	5	6 (8)	4	4	5	5.1	1

Initiative	10 + 2D6
Condition Monitor	11
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 7 (9), Social 7
Armor	8
Skills	Assensing 5, Astral Combat 4, Automatics 4, Blades 3 (Knives +2), Conjuring 5, Diving 3 (Military +2), Etiquette 4 (Corporate +2), Leadership 4, Perception 5, Sneaking 4, Sorcery skill group 6, Swimming 5 (Long Distance +2), Unarmed Combat 6 (Subduing +2)
Qualities	Magician
Augmentation	Cerebral booster 2, synaptic booster 1
Spells	Hose*, Levitate, Mist, Shadow, Shark Form, Spatial Sense (Extended), Thought Recognition, Tsunami, Ultrasound Cryptesthesia, Water Grenade * *Hose and Tsunami work like Flamethrower and Fireball, only with Water Elemental Effect, p. 105,* Street Grimoire
Gear	AR gloves, armored wet suit [like form fitting w/ YNT softweave and ruthenium Rating 4], commlink (Device Rating 6), diving gear, earbuds [w/ audio enhancement 2, selective sound filter 1], goggles [w/ flare compensation, image link, low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic], grenades [3 flash-bangs, 2 thermal smoke], Spellcasting focus (Combat, Force 3), subvocal microphone
Weapons	PPSK-4 [Machine Pistol, Acc 5 (6), DV 7P, AP –1, SA/BF, RC 1, 30(c), w/smartlink, explosive ammunition or Stick-n-Shock, DV 5S(e) AP –5] Survival knife [Acc 5, Reach —, DV 9P, AP –1]

CHARACTER TROVE

The characters in this chapter are used in chapters throughout this book, but they are also multi-purpose non-player characters that can be dropped into a wide variety of settings, from campaigns using material from *Bloody Business* to just about any ongoing *Shadowrun* story. Enjoy!

tAlong with the characters don't miss the new adept power—Body Sculpt—at the end of the chapter!

BRUTE TOXIC SHAMAN

(ORK, PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M
7	3	4	8	5	3	5	6	4	13

Condition Monitor	12
Armor	15
Limits	Physical 8, Mental 6, Social 8
Physical Initiative	9(15) + 4D6
Astral Initiative	10(16) + 5D6
Skills	Alchemy 6, Arcana 5, Assensing 7, Astral Combat 8, Athletics skill group 6, Banishing 6, Blades 5, Binding 9, First Aid 4, Outdoors skill group 8, Perception 8, Sneaking 8, Sorcery skill group 5, Summoning 8, Unarmed Combat 6 (+2)
Qualities	Exceptional Attribute (Charisma), Magician, Mentor Spirit (Doom)
Initiate Grade	6
Metamagics	Absorption, Corruption, Invocation, Masking, Shielding, Reflection
Spells	Acid Stream (+2), Heal, Increase Reflexes, Napalm (+2), Slay (Human) (+2), Pollutant (Stream) (+2), Pollutant Wave (+2), Toxic Wave (+2)
Bound Spirits	2x Force 6 Noxious Spirits, 2x Force 6 Barren Spirits, 2x Force 6 Plague Spirits
Gear	Light security armor [15] (scavenged from dead MCT bodies), Binding focus (Force 5), 6 alchemical preparations [2 x Lightning Ball (Force 6, Potency 5), 2 x Mob Mind (Force 7, Potency 5), 2 x Manaball (Force 7, Potency 6)]
Weapons	Combat Knife [Blade, Reach —, Acc 6, DV 8P, AP –3]
Notes	Magic-based limits are increased by the rating of toxic-aligned background count. Toxic shaman receives a +2 dice pool bonus for unarmed combat, in addition to +2 modifier for combat spells, as noted in stats. Stats reflect a Force 6 Increase Reflexes sustained with 6 hits.

GANGER HACKER

(HUMAN, PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	M
2	3	3	3	5	6(7)	5	2	6/7

Condition Monitor	11
Armor	6
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 8, Social 5
Physical Initiative	8 + 1D6
Matrix Initiative (cold-sim)	Data Processing + 5 + 3D6
Matrix Initiative (hot-sim)	Data Processing + 5 + 4D6
Skills	Computer skill group 6, Cybercombat 5, Electronic Warfare 5, Forgery 3, Hacking 7 (Hosts +2), Intimidation 2, Perception 2, Pistols 1 (Tasers +2)
Qualities	Codeslinger (Hack on the Fly), Uncouth
Cyberdeck	Hermes Chariot [Device Rating 2, currently set to Attack 5, Sleaze 4, Data Processing 4, Firewall 2]
Programs	Armor, Biofeedback, Encryption, Exploit, Hammer, Sneak, Stealth
Augmentations	Cerebral booster 1, datajack
Gear	Armor clothing [6], commlink (Renraku Sensei, Device Rating 3), jammer (area, Rating 4)
Weapons	Yamaha Pulsar [Taser, Acc 5, DV 7S(e), AP 5, SA, RC —, 4(m)]

GANGER TECHNOMANCER

(HUMAN, PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	RES
1	3	4	3	5	3	3	5	6.1	7

Condition Monitor	11
Armor	6
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 8, Social 7
Physical Initiative	8 + 1D6
Matrix Initiative (hot-sim)	12 + 5D6
Skills	Compiling 5, Computer 6, Cybercombat 7, Decompiling 5, Hardware 2, Electronic Warfare 7, Forgery 2, Hacking 6, Intimidation 2, Leadership 3, Negotiation 2, Perception 4, Pistols 2 (Tasers +2), Registering 6, Software 3
Qualities	Codeslinger (Brute Force), Exceptional Attribute (Logic)
Living Persona	Device Rating 7, Attack 6, Sleaze 5
Complex Forms	Diffusion of Data Processing, Diffusion of Sleaze, Infusion of Attack, Infusion of Firewall, Pulse Storm, Resonance Spike, Static Bomb
Registered Sprites	Crack sprite (Level 6), Fault sprite (Level 5)
Submersion Grade	2
Echoes	Attack Upgrade, Overclocking
Gear	Armor clothing [6], commlink (Meta Link, Device Rating 1)
Weapons	Yamaha Pulsar [Taser, Acc 5, DV 7S(e), AP 5, SA, RC —, 4(m)]

HUMANIS TRACKER

(HUMAN, OF COURSE; PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
3	3	4 (6)	5	5	3	4	2	1.4

Condition Monitor	11
Armor	15 (17)
Limits	Physical 8, Mental 5, Social 4
Physical Initiative	8(10) + 1(3) D6
Skills	Blades 3, First Aid 3, Gunnery 2, Gymnastics 2, Intimidation 5, Longarms 6, Perception 4, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols 5, Running 2, Sneaking 3, Throwing Weapon 4, Tracking 5, Unarmed Combat 4
Qualities	Indomitable (Physical 1), Prejudiced (Radical, metahumans)
Augmentations	Cyberears [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement 2, balance augmenter, select sound filter 2], cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ image link, low-light vision, smartlink, vision enhancement 3], dermal plating 2, wired reflexes 2
Gear	Autopicker, bug scanner (Rating 5), commlink (Erika Elite, Device Rating 4), full body armor [15], handheld sensor [Capacity 2, w/ cyberware scanner, radio signal scanner, all Rating 3], maglock passkey (Rating 4), restraints (metal, 15), 10 stealth RFID tags (Device Rating 4)
Weapons	Ares Crusader II [Machine Pistol, Acc 5(7), DV 7P, AP —, SA/BF, RC 2, 40(c), w/ gas-vent 2, internal smartgun system, 5 clips regular ammo, 5 clips gel ammo] Ares Desert Strike [Sniper Rifle, Acc 7, DV 13 P, AP –4, SA, RC (1), 14(c), w/ shock pad, 10 clips regular ammo, 5 clips gel ammo] PJSS Model 55 [Shotgun, Acc 6, DV 11P, AP –1, SS, RC (1), 2(b), w/ shock pad, 20 rounds regular ammo, 20 rounds gel ammo]

MID-LEVEL CORPORATE SUIT

(HUMAN, PROFESSIONAL RATING 3)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
3	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	1.5

Condition Monitor	11
Armor	9
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 6, Social 7
Physical Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Etiquette 4 (Corporate +2), Leadership 5, First Aid 1, Instruction 2, Negotiation 4, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Pistols 2, Perception 3
Qualities	Blandness
Augmentations	Cybereyes [Rating 1, w/ image link, vision enhancement 1], datajack, taste booster
Gear	Commlink (Transys Avalon, Device Rating 6), jammer (area, Rating 4)
Weapons	Ares Light Fire 70 [Light Pistol, Acc 7, DV 6P, AP —, SA, RC —, 16(c), w/ 2 clips regular ammo]

MR. JOHNSON

(CORPORATE; ELF, PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
3 (5)	5	4	3	5	4	5	6	4.6

Condition Monitor	11
Armor	6 (8)
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 6, Social 8
Physical Initiative	9 + 1D6
Skills	Blades 2 (Knives +2), Computer 4, Con 4, Etiquette 6 (Corporate +2), First Aid 2, Forgery 4, Intimidation 3, Negotiations 6, Perception 4, Pistols 4, Sneaking 2, Tracking 2
Qualities	First Impression
Augmentations	Bone lacing (aluminum), cybereyes [Rating 1, w/ image link, vision enhancement 1], mnemonic enhancer 2
Gear	Commlink [Transys Avalon, Device Rating 6], cyberware scanner (Rating 2, on RFID chip), jammer (area, Rating 6)
Weapons	Combat knife [Blade, Acc 6, Reach —, DV 7P, AP –3] Browning Ultra-Power [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(6), DV 8P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 10(c), w/ laser sight, 4 clips regular ammo]

MR. JOHNSON

(HIGH-LEVEL INITIATE; HUMAN, PROFESSIONAL RATING 5)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M
3	4	3	3	6	6	5	6	6	12

Condition Monitor	11
Armor	9
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 8, Social 8
Physical Initiative	8 + 1D6
Astral Initiative	10 + 2D6
Skills	Arcana 6, Assensing 8, Con 8, Conjuring skill group 6, Counterspelling 9, Enchanting skill group 5, Etiquette 6, Impersonation 7, Leadership 5, Negotiation 8 (Bargaining +2), Perception 6, Performance 3, Ritual Spellcasting 5, Spellcasting 8
Qualities	Magician, Mentor Spirit (Wolf)
Initiate Grade	7
Metamagics	Extended masking, flexible signature, flux, greater reflection, masking, reflection, shielding
Spells	Alter Memory, Compel Truth, Control Thoughts, Dream, Fireball, Flamethrower, Heal, Improved Invisibility, Influence, Manaball, Manabolt, Physical Mask, Stealth, Trid Phantasm
Bound Spirits	3 x spirits of fire (Force 6), 3 x spirits of water (Force 6)
Gear	Berwick Suit [9], commlink (Transys Avalon, Device Rating 6)

MR. JOHNSON

(LAW ENFORCEMENT; DWARF, PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
5	5 (6)	4 (5)	5 (6)	4	4	4	5	3.9

Condition Monitor	11
Armor	9
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 6, Social 6
Physical Initiative	8 (9) + 1D6
Skills	Clubs 3, Firearms skill group 5, First Aid 3, Gunnery 2, Gymnastics 2, Intimidation 4, Negotiation 7, Perception 4, Pilot Ground Craft 4, Running 3, Sneaking 3, Tracking 3, Unarmed Combat 3
Qualities	Code of Honor (Warrior's Code), Guts
Augmentations	Cyberears [Rating 3, w/ audio enhancement 3, balance augmenter, select sound filter 3, spatial recognizer], cybereyes [Rating 3, w/ image link, low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision, vision enhancement 3, vision magnification], muscle replacement 1, reaction enhancers 1
Gear	Armor vest [9], bug scanner (Rating 5), commlink (Erika Elite, Device Rating 4), handheld sensor [Capacity 2, w/ cyberware scanner, radio signal scanner, all Rating 2], restraints (metal, 15)
Weapons	Colt Government 2066 [Heavy Pistol, Acc 6(8), DV 7P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 14(c), w/ smartgun system, 4 clips regular ammo] HK-227 [SMG, Acc 5(7), DV 7P, AP —, SA/BF/FA, RC (1), 28(c), w/ retractable stock, smartgun system, sound suppressor, 4 clips regular ammo]

MR. JOHNSON

(PROMINENT; ORK, PROFESSIONAL RATING 5)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
7	5	4	7	4	3	5	5	6.0

Condition Monitor	11
Armor	9
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 6, Social 6
Physical Initiative	8 (9) + 1D6
Skills	Clubs 3, Firearms skill group 5, First Aid 3, Gunnery 2, Gymnastics 2, Intimidation 4, Negotiation 7, Perception 4, Pilot Ground Craft 4, Running 3, Sneaking 3, Tracking 3, Unarmed Combat 3
Qualities	Code of Honor (Warrior's Code), Guts
Augmentations	Cyberears [Rating 3, w/ audio enhancement 3, balance augmenter, select sound filter 3, spatial recognizer], cybereyes [Rating 3, w/ image link, low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision, vision enhancement 3, vision magnification], muscle replacement 1, reaction enhancers 1
Gear	Armor vest [9], bug scanner (Rating 5), commlink (Erika Elite, Device Rating 4), handheld sensor [Capacity 2, w/ cyberware scanner, radio signal scanner, all Rating 2], restraints (metal, 15)
Weapons	Colt Government 2066 [Heavy Pistol, Acc 6(8), DV 7P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 14(c), w/ smartgun system, 4 clips regular ammo] HK-227 [SMG, Acc 5(7), DV 7P, AP —, SA/BF/FA, RC (1), 28(c), w/ retractable stock, smartgun system, sound suppressor, 4 clips regular ammo]

PIRATES

(ORK, PROFESSIONAL RATING 2)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
5 (+1)	4 (5)	4 (5)	5 (7)	4	2	4	3	4.7

Condition Monitor	11
Armor	9
Limits	Physical 7 (8), Mental 4, Social 5
Physical Initiative	8 (9) + D6
Skills	Automatics 4, Blades 4, Diving 3, Gymnastics 3, Intimidation 3, Navigation 4, Perception 3, Pilot Watercraft 4, Pistols 4, Running 2, Sneaking 2, Survival 3, Tracking 4
Qualities	Addiction (mild, alcohol), Bad Rep, Guts, Toughness
Augmentations	Cyberarm [right, obvious, full, customized, Agility 5, Strength 7], reaction enhancers 1
Gear	Commlink [Sony Emperor, Device Rating 2], grapple gun (w/ 100 m standard rope), sunglasses [Capacity 3, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision, vision enhancement 1], 2x light sticks, 4 x stim patches, survival kit, 2x trauma patches
Weapons	Sword [Blade, Acc 6, Reach 1, DV 8(10)P, AP –2, AP –2] Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, Acc 4, DV 7P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 8(m), w/ 4 magazines regular ammo] Uzi IV [SMG, Acc 4(5), DV 7P, AP —, BF, RC (1), 24(c), w/ folding stock, laser sight, 8 clips regular ammo

SECURITY GRUNT

(HUMAN, PROFESSIONAL RATING 3)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS
5	4	4 (6)	4	4	3	4	3	4	5

Condition Monitor	11
Armor	12(+2)
Limits	Physical 6 (7), Mental 5, Social 5
Initiative	8 (10) + 1D6
Skills	Athletics skill group 3, Clubs 5, Etiquette (Corporate) 3 (+2), Firearms skill group 6, Perception 4, Throwing Weapons 4
Knowledge Skills	Small Unit Tactics 4
Augmentations	Cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision], datajack, reaction enhancers (2)
Gear	Armored jacket [12], commlink (Device Rating 4), helmet [+2]
Weapons	Ares Predator V [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(7), DV 8P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 15(c), w/ 2 clips Stick-n-Shock ammo, 2 clips regular ammo] Defiance T-250 [Shotgun, Acc 4(6), DV 10P, AP –1, SS/SA, RC —, 5(m), w/ 15 rounds flechette ammo, top-mounted external smartgun system] Ingram Smartgun X [Submachine Gun, Acc 4(6), DV 8P, AP —, BF/FA, RC 2, 32(c), w/ 2 clips Stick-n-Shock ammo, 2 clips regular ammo] Stun baton [Club, Acc 4(5), Reach 1, DV 9S(e), AP –5, w/ 10 charges, personalized grip]

SECURITY MAGE

(HUMAN, PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M
3	3	4	2	5	5	4	3	6	5

Condition Monitor	10
Armor	12
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 7, Social 6
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Assensing 3, Counterspelling 4, Etiquette (Corporate) 3 (+2), Pistols 4, Spellcasting (Illusion Spells) 5 (+2), Summoning 5
Knowledge Skills	Small Unit Tactics 4
Spells	Bugs, Hot Potato, Increase Reflexes, Mass Confusion, Phantasm
Gear	Armored jacket [12], contacts (rating 2 w/ image link and smartlink), commlink (Device Rating 4), mage sight goggles, sustaining spell focus (2, health spells)
Weapons	Ares Predator V [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(7), DV 8P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 15(c), w/ 2 clips Stick-n-Shock ammo, 2 clips regular ammo]

STRONG-WILLED TOXIC SHAMAN

(HUMAN)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M
3	3	4	2	5	5	4	3	6	5

Condition Monitor	10/11
Armor	15
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 7, Social 8
Physical Initiative	9 + 1D6
Astral Initiative	10 + 2D6
Skills	Animal Handling 3, Arcana 7, Artificing 5, Assensing 4, Athletics skill group 4, Blades 6, Conjuring skill group 6, Counterspelling 5 (Combat Spells +2), First Aid 6, Outdoors skill group 6, Perception 5, Sneaking 7(+2), Spellcasting 9 (Manipulation Spells +2)
Qualities	Magician, Mentor Spirit (Mutation)
Spells	Acid Stream, Armor, Control Pack, Destroy (Groundcraft), Heal (+2), Influence, Sludge (Gun), Toxic Wave
Bound Spirits	2 x Force 6 abomination spirits
Gear	1x Force 6 sustaining focus, 1x Force 6 spellcasting Focus, full body armor [15]
Weapons	Katana [Blade, Acc 7, Reach 1, DV 6P, AP –3]
Notes	Magic-based limits are increased by the rating of the background count. Sneaking gains a +2 bonus for a physical skill from the Mentor Spirit (Mutation). The toxic shaman also receives a +2 dice pool modifier for heal spells.

SWAT TEAM MEMBER

(HUMAN, PROFESSIONAL RATING 5)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
5	6 (8)	5 (7)	4 (6)	5	3	5	2	2.0

Condition Monitor	11
Armor	18
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 6, Social 5
Physical Initiative	10 (12) + 1(3)D6
Skills	Clubs 4, Firearms skill group 7, Intimidation 5, Leadership 1, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 4, Running 2, Sneaking 4, Tracking 4 (Urban +2), Unarmed Combat 4, Throwing Weapon 4
Qualities	Toughness
Augmentations	Cyberears [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement 2, damper, select sound filter 3, spatial recognizer, sound link], cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ flare compensation, image link, smartlink, thermographic vision, vision enhancement 2], implanted commlink (Renraku Sensei, Device Rating 3), muscle replacement 2 (alphaware), wired reflexes 2 (alphaware)
Gear	Biomonitor, restraints (plasteel, x 10) stim patch (x 4), SWAT armor [15] (w/ helmet +3)
Weapons	Ares Alpha [Assault Rifle, Acc 5(7), DV 11P, AP –2, SA/BF/FA, RC 2, 42(c), w/ smartgun system, 4 clips regular ammo, 2 clips gel ammo] Grenade launcher [Acc 4(6), DV as grenade, AP —, SS, RC —, 6(c), w/ 2 clips flash-bang mini-grenades] Ares Predator V [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(7), DV 8P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 15(c), w/ smartgun system, 5 clips regular ammo, 2 clips gel ammo] Club [Club, Acc 4, Reach 1, DV 7(9)P, AP —] Flash-bang grenades (2 clips for Area Alpha grenade launcher, 6 handheld grenades) [Grenade, DV 10S, AP –4, Blast 10m radius]

VETERAN MERCENARY

(HUMAN, PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
4	4 (6)	3 (5)	3 (5)	4	3	4	2	3.0

Condition Monitor	10
Armor	15
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 4
Physical Initiative	7(9) + 1(3)D6
Skills	Firearms skill group 6, First Aid 4, Gunnery 3, Intimidation 2, Leadership 3, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Running 4, Swimming 2, Throwing Weapons 4, Unarmed Combat 5,
Qualities	Toughness
Augmentations	Bone density 2, cyberears [Rating 2, w/ audio enhancement 2, damper, select sound filter 3, spatial recognizer, sound link], cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ flare compensation, image link, smartlink, thermographic vision, vision enhancement 2], muscle augmentation 2, muscle toner 2, synaptic booster 2
Gear	Commlink (Erika Elite, Device Rating 4), full body armor [15], medkit (Rating 3, stim patches (x 5),
Weapons	Ares Alpha [Assault Rifle, Acc 5(7), DV 11P, AP –2, SA/BF/FA, RC 2, 42(c), w/ smartgun system, 4 clips regular ammo, 2 clips APDS ammo] Grenade launcher [Acc 4(6), DV as grenade, AP —, SS, RC —, 6(c), w/ 2 clips high-explosive mini-grenades] Ares Predator V [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(7), DV 8P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 15(c), w/ smartgun system, 5 clips regular ammo, 2 clips APDS ammo] High-explosive grenades (2 clips for Area Alpha grenade launcher, 6 handheld grenades) [Grenade, DV 16P, AP –2, Blast –2/m]

EXTRA RULES

NEW ADEPT POWER

BODY SCULPT

Cost: 1 PP
Prerequisite: Facial Sculpt
Activation: 1 minute

A further advancement of the Facial Sculpt power, Body Sculpt allows the adept to magically shape his or her full body within limits. While the total body mass does not change dramatically, the body (skeletal bone and muscles) can be elongated, shrunken or otherwise altered to appear like another metatype or a metavariant of its own or target race as long as the change and difference is not too radical (e.g. wakyambi, nartaki, cyclops). The mass of the adept using this power can change by ten percent at most. Due to the mass difference between trolls and other metahumans, the power does not allow trolls to change into any other metaspecies (and vice versa), only into variants of their own metatype (fomori, minotaur, giant). One of the perks of this power is that it allows the adept to magically age/rejuvenate (in appearance if not in health and energy) and switch phenotypic gender (from male to female and vice versa) by growing or shrinking of primary and secondary sexual organs. All of the effects can be sustained for (Magic) hours. The use of this power gives the adept an additional +2 dice pool modifier for any Disguise Test. Unlike Facial Sculpt, this power does not come with multiple levels; the +2 bonus is the most that can be gained from the power.

The time required to change one feature is approximately one hour. Multiple features can be changed simultaneously with a Body + Magic Test, with each hit resulting in one additional change. The adept needs another full minute to undo the changes and return their features to normal. The time required to change one feature is approximately ten minutes. The adept needs another full minute to undo the changes and return their features to normal.

The power does not allow the adept to mimic and express any changeling metagenetic traits. All of their attributes, skills, and powers remain unchanged; only their physical appearance is altered.

WOUNDED FURY

A scared megacorporation does not run and hide in the shadows. Instead it lashes out, swiping with sharp claws, not caring who is hit by the blows. Many of the megacorps are currently reeling, hit by multiple harsh wallops. NeoNET and Evo are dealing with the fallout of the CFD virus, Ares has powerful forces eating it away from inside, Horizon backed the losing side of the Aztlan-Amazonia war, and the Japanacorps are rearing back to take on the world—and each other. When the corps get aggressive, shadowrunners get called, and blood gets shed.

Bloody Business is a campaign book giving players the chance to earn piles of money from the megacorps as they reel through troubles and crises. It'll take a lot of good shadowrunning moves to earn that cash—and even better moves to survive long enough to collect it. With short adventure outlines that can be played independently or linked into a longer campaign, and NPC stats to suit a wide variety of situations, *Bloody Business* plunges *Shadowrun* teams in the middle of corporate chaos.

Bloody Business is for use with *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition.*

SHADOWRUN
FIFTH EDITION

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